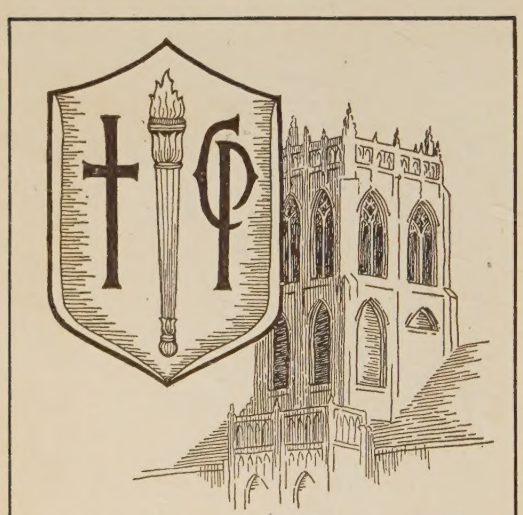

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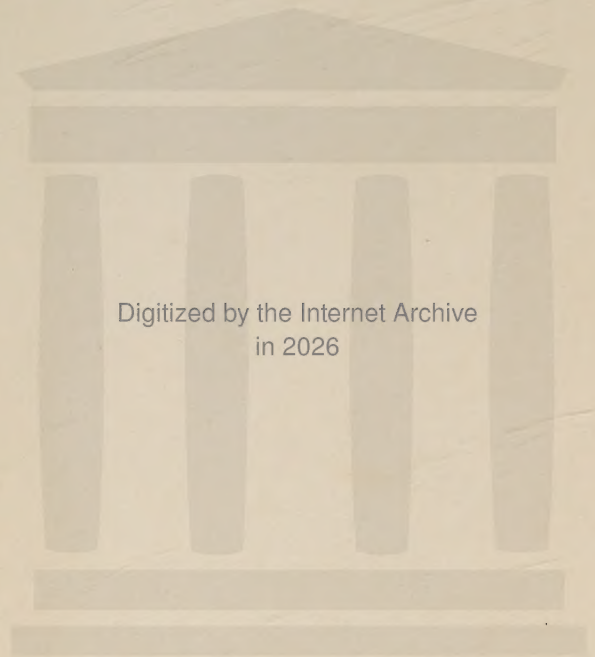

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# A HANDBOOK

OF

# GREEK RELIGION

BY

ARTHUR FAIRBANKS

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# PREFACE

ALTHOUGH the mythology of Greece is a familiar subject, and Greek religious antiquities have long been studied, Greek religion, as such, is a comparatively unknown field. In the present volume, religious antiquities, forms of revelation, and worship and belief are discussed in Part I. from the standpoint of their religious significance. It may be that readers who are more interested in the content than in the form of Greek religion will pass from the Introduction directly to Parts II and III, but Part I has been left in its logical place. Greek mythology, on the other hand, finds no place in the discussion. If too much emphasis has been laid on the difference between mythology and religion, it may be regarded as a natural reaction from the usual identification of two quite different interests of the Greek mind.

For various reasons Greek religion is not, like Greek mythology, an easy subject to handle. There is one mythology, or at least a tendency to one mythology, as over against many almost unrelated forms of worship. Moreover, mythology lent itself to literary treatment, while many of the data for Greek religion come in fragmentary form from late authors. As to other sources, inscriptions are very important, but they deal only with detail; while archaeological remains are often difficult to interpret. Although no complete picture is possible, it is hoped that this presentation of the subject will give a point of view which will be helpful in understanding Greek authors as well as in determining the contribution of Greece to the religious conceptions and forces of the later world.

ARTHUR FAIRBANKS.

April, 1910.

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# INTRODUCTION

**1. Was there a Greek Religion?** — The rich and varied mythology of Greece is studied by the historian, by the poet, by every reader of the ancient classics, and it has been studied with more or less interest ever since the Homeric poems were composed; but the question whether these gods were worshipped is rarely asked. Such a strange condition of affairs is due partly to the nature of these gods, partly to a narrow conception of what religion is, partly to the fact that the Greeks had no religious dogma and left no sacred writings. The picture of the Greek gods in myth certainly does not inspire religious sentiments or suggest worship. And it is not difficult to see that myths have become so familiar as quite to overshadow any religious side which the gods may have had for their worshippers. Not only Greek poetry, but the poetry of Rome and of every later European literature as well, has constantly drawn its inspiration from these myths. The question remains whether worship and the religious sentiment expressed in worship were really an important factor in ancient Greek life.

The answer to this question depends on our definition of religion. Religion to-day lays emphasis on one God, ever present in the world, but something more than the world itself, a god whose wisdom and love are manifested with increasing clearness. Moreover religion rests on the revelation of this god to man, and the revelation is stated, however imperfectly, in creeds and dogmas. A god of absolute holiness, the human soul with eternal possibilities of blessedness or woe, a conscience stamping every act as right or wrong, divine love as a constant ally of the good, — such, perhaps, we understand to be the ultimate factors of religion.

They were not present in Greece. The gods were not holy, nor did religion judge human life from the ethical standpoint. That a god should care for men as men is a thought which belongs only to later periods of Greek religion. There was no religious dogma, no revelation of the divine will except in particular cases. But if religion is the belief in a personal being or beings, higher than man and interested in his welfare, if it is the yearning of the human heart for the protection and sympathy of its gods, if prayer and sacrifice and the effort to please the gods are religion, we find it in Greece. A Greek city was dotted with shrines where men worshipped, as few cities are supplied with churches to-day. The calendar was primarily a device for locating festivals to the gods, sacred days which numbered quite as many in the year as our Sundays. When St. Paul found at Athens not only temples for many gods, but also an altar "to the Unknown God," erected to correct any possible omission, he might well call the Athenians a "very religious" people.[1] From the earliest effort to win aid from vaguely conceived spirits up to the ideal of Zeus the father-god and of Apollo who reveals his will, we may trace a development continuous if irregular. And in rites of feasting and dance and sacred drama, to us strange indeed, were formed conceptions religious enough to affect our Christianity profoundly.

A superficial investigation is sufficient to establish the fact that religious practices were as numerous and as far-reaching in Greece as among any known people. That religion rested somewhat lightly on men's shoulders, that religious rites were for the most part occasions of joy and gladness, is no reason for refusing to recognize their genuine meaning. It only remains to ask whether the meaning they did have is sufficient to justify an investigation of the facts. And to this question also the answer is not difficult. The greater thinkers of Greece, as well as the greater artists, found deep and important meaning in the religion of the people. No reader of Sophocles and of Plato fails to be impressed with their insight into religious truth; and our

[1] *Acts* 17. 23.

copies of great temple statues, imperfectly as they reproduce the originals, yet are sufficient to show how the artist found and interpreted a real religious sentiment. As Aristotle remarks,[1] the name of *father* applied to Zeus is equivalent to "paternal ruler" and includes the idea of his loving care for men. The inherent likeness of man and god, the human-ness of god and the divine-ness of man, has rarely been grasped more clearly than by the Greeks. It was recognized that the idea of communion underlies worship, and that in the service of a god man grows like him. We may frankly acknowledge that such conceptions were not explicitly recognized by the people, and still claim that there is a Greek religion deserving of study.

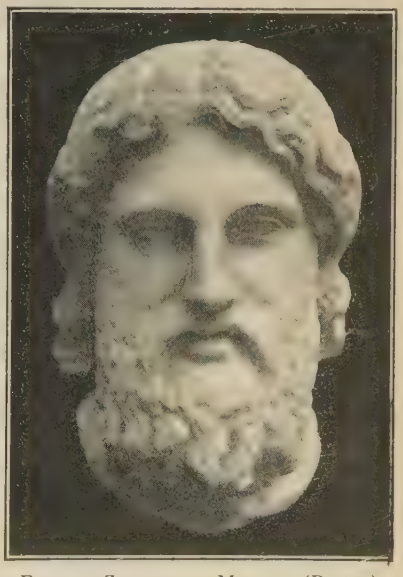

FIG. 1. — ZEUS FROM MYLASA (Boston)

The head is perhaps closer than any other marble copy to the statue of Zeus at Olympia by Pheidias.

Nor was this religion without its continuing potency in later Europe. It will appear later in the discussion that Greek life was so shot through with these religious threads that no phase of it would have been the same, if its religious side had been neglected. The Greek conceptions and ideals which reappear in modern life are not free from this stamp. Further, it will also appear in the later discussion that Christianity itself was modified and its forms at least were enriched by much material from Greek religious rites. Indeed one might claim that

[1] Aristotle, *Polit* 1. 12.

Greek religion has exercised about as much influence, though indirectly, on various phases of modern life, as Greek mythology has exercised on modern literature.

And if Greek religion is to be studied for the influence it has had on modern life, as well as for its immediate influence on other phases of Greek life, the interest of the study will be much increased by its connection with "comparative religion" so-called (*i.e.* the history of other worships and beliefs as compared with Christianity). It is strange indeed that the religions of India and China, and even of savage races, should have been studied diligently to the neglect of religion in Greece and Rome. This latter branch of study, however, may profit by one tenet which has been established by the study of religion in other fields, viz., that in considering the Greek gods and their worship the student is not to search for Christian conceptions in another field, but rather to investigate the facts and interpret them in the light of the highest religious experience he knows.

In the brief presentation of the subject here attempted, *first*, the attention of the reader is asked to the phenomena of religion at Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.; *secondly*, the main periods in the history of Greek religion are sketched; and *thirdly*, questions as to the influence and significance of Greek religion receive further consideration. So varied are the details of religious worship that ordinarily the usages of Athens alone have been presented; it is only in the effort to reconstruct the religious history of earlier ages that a broader outlook is imperatively necessary. In order to secure the proper standpoint for such a study as is here proposed, a few general topics are treated in the following pages of the introduction.

2. **Mythology and Religion.** — It has been assumed in the preceding section that Greek religion is something quite different from Greek mythology, yet the fact remains that they are often confused. And inasmuch as every reader first becomes acquainted with the Greek gods through myth, it is essential for the student of religion to seek a clear-cut conception of the relation between

religion and mythology. Myths I have defined elsewhere[1] as "stories of the acts of superhuman beings, often improbable to us, but believed to be true by those who related them." The beings which appear in myths are inevitably personal, for the myth tells of their actions; and the myth as inevitably assumes the story form. Some of the tales appear to us weird, immoral, hardly "true to life"; yet they were believed as distinctly as the child believes in his Santa Claus. Nor was it till they had really become an element of literature that any one could think of taking license with them. Myths, thus conceived, stand close to philosophy and to poetry: to philosophy, for problems of nature and of human life are treated in these stories; to poetry, for it is the naïve poetic imagination which conceives the forces of the world as personal beings. Their existence depended on their power to satisfy the intelligence and gratify the aesthetic sense of those who repeated them. But while myths often expressed deep truths and were ordinarily accepted as true statements of facts, the myth proper was never an article of dogma. Among other races the so-called myths were sometimes codified, sometimes created, by the priests. In Egypt, for instance, and in India, the stories of the gods bore this hieratic stamp. The nature of the priesthood in Greece,[2] however, was such that myths were kept comparatively free from the artificial influence of any organized theology.

In contrast with mythology, religion is primarily a matter of practice (worship) and of emotions expressed in worship (such as reverence and the sense of dependence). It certainly includes belief also, but in Greece the intellectual element remained rather in the background, for belief was not definitely formulated from the religious standpoint. It is a most natural error, and an error involving some measure of truth, to hold that Greek belief about the gods was expressed in the form of myth. The differences between the gods of mythology and the gods of worship may be discussed under three headings:

(1) Religion and mythology represent the gods from vitally dif-

[1] *The Mythology of Greece and Rome* (1907), p. 1.

[2] Cp. *infra*, p. 76 f.

ferent standpoints. Most of the superhuman beings in myths are fundamentally the same as the gods to whom men look for help in worship; in myth, however, the imagination is absolutely untrammelled by any considerations of religion or morality. The Athena springing full-armed from the brain of Zeus, or (in the *Iliad*) seeking to block her father's plans, is far enough from the goddess whom Pheidias represented in gold and ivory, that spirit of wisdom who stood for all that was best in the Athenian people. In the Homeric poems the Apollo worshipped by Chryses (*Iliad*, 2) and the Apollo wounding Patroclus from behind on the battlefield (*Iliad*, 16) have little in common; nor does Apollo slaying the Python while a babe in arms suggest the sage spirit of Delphi to whom the Greek world looked for guidance. Mythology is not a peculiar form of theology in poetic guise; myths were originally believed to be true, but they were never a religious creed; they were often incorporated in hymns of worship, but in themselves they had little enough to do with worship.

(2) It appears, further, that the supernatural beings of religion by no means coincide with the supernatural beings of myth. The greater gods appear in both lists; in addition mythology includes all manner of inferior beings, such as nymphs, satyrs, centaurs, which rarely or never are worshipped, and a long list of heroes, very few of whom are worshipped. On the other hand the lesser spirits who receive worship in some one locality, are rarely heeded by myth; or if the name appears in myth it may mean a person radically different from the one worshipped. At Athens such divine beings as Adrasteia, Alcon, Ariste, Dexion, Eirene, Eucleia, Hesychos, Nemesis, Tritopatreis, received worship but had no direct place in myth. It has often been assumed that the origin of religion is to be explained by means of mythology. So far as Greece is concerned the indebtedness seems on the whole to be reversed. Mythology really derived much of its content from religious ritual, while beings which originated in myth did not ordinarily come to be worshipped. The gods of myth and religion form two groups which overlap but are not identical, a fact which

seems simple enough when the difference of standpoint is once fully grasped. If there were no other proof that myth is not the religious doctrine of the Greek gods, it would be sufficient to point out that these two groups of gods do not coincide.

(3) And where the same names appear in both lists their significance is by no means the same. For worship the gods are located at definite shrines, where they bear specific names (epithet); in myth they are as universal as the known world, and their local relations are no more than favorite haunts. In myth the functions of each god are sharply defined and his personal character corresponds to his specific functions; the god of worship has widespread power to bless, a power by no means limited to his function in myth. The process by which myths arose has left the gods, some in a non-moral form, some in a form distinctly at variance with human standards of morality. Worship did not always make of them moral beings, but inasmuch as the relation between god and worshippers is of a moral nature, and further, inasmuch as the Greek gods (like men) were members of the moral universe, the tendency in Greece is toward an ultimate union of religion and morality. Finally, mythology exists by making its gods very human, and as it develops into a system the gods acquire definite personal characters. For the worshipper a god never loses that vague mysterious side which stirs the emotion of awe, for there is no limiting influence in worship to define the divine nature. Even the sense that gods are akin to man is often blunted in religious ritual. That the gods handled by myth should remain gods at all, that real worship should be possible when children were brought up on these stories of Aphrodite and Poseidon and Ares, is a lasting tribute to the religious spirit of the Greeks.

While the differences between religion and mythology are such that the two must be studied separately and with very different aims, the fact remains that the more important gods do appear both in myth and in worship. More than this, there can be no question that myths were passed on from mouth to mouth at the only international gatherings in Greece, the greater religious festi-

vals. The influence of these gatherings would be most marked on that class of myths which recite the story of a particular shrine. Much of the Homeric hymn to Demeter (cp. Part I, Chap. ii, p. 135) describes in mythical form the origin of her worship at Eleusis, and the practices of worship were the influence shaping the myth as to the origin of the cult. So the marvellous birth of Athena and

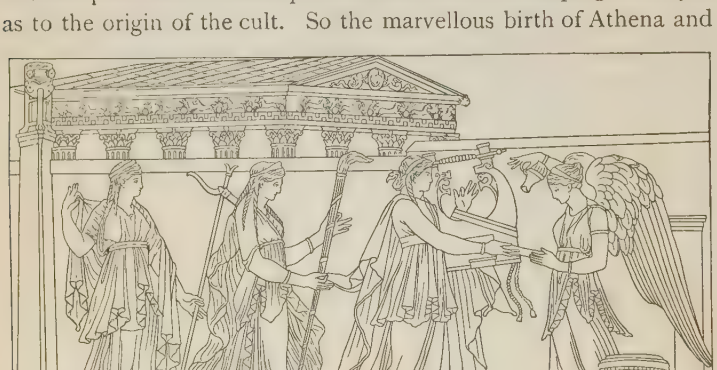

FIG. 2. — LATE GREEK RELIEF

Apollo is represented as a victorious musician at Delphi, receiving a libation from Nike.

the contest of Athena with Poseidon are connected with the worship of the goddess on the Acropolis. There is no evidence that priests ever had much to do with these myths. The popular demand created an explanation for the existence of the shrine, its importance, and the character of its worship. As the shrine grew in influence its myths would be carried far and wide by pilgrim visitors from different parts of the country, till they found a place in the generally accepted Greek mythology. The practice of holding musical contests at religious festivals increased the opportunity for the development of these myths, for the poet's theme was almost inevitably chosen from the legend of the shrine where he sang. At Delphi it was Apollo's birth, or his coming to Delphi,

or his victory over the dragon — perhaps all three themes at once — which was celebrated in these contests. In this way a myth might find its way into actual hymns of worship, though here there would be occasion only for the bare outline of the story.

The mythical account of Hera's marriage to Zeus is apparently derived from religious practices in the worship of the goddess of marriage, though in this instance the rites were somewhat widely prevalent instead of belonging to one great festival. So the story of the second birth of Dionysus from the thigh of Zeus seems to be a poetic statement of the fact that Dionysus worship was introduced into Greece under the protecting aegis of Zeus. Interpreted thus, it states in poetic form an important fact in the history of Greek religion. Although myths did not in Greece receive a hieratic stamp to mark them as sacred legend, the two classes of myths just noted — myths which give facts of religious history, and myths which arise in the effort to explain religious practice — are not to be neglected by the student of religion itself.

Again, it appears that after myths have been taken up into literature they are employed by the poets to teach deep religious lessons. Pindar and Simonides feel quite free to modify tales of the gods to accord with their own religious ideas; while tragedy consistently handles the great problems of life under the form of myth. On the other hand, we have no indication that officials of religion, priests or prophets, recognized sacred story as within their province. Where myth becomes a vehicle of religious teaching, its real nature as myth is essentially modified before it can serve a dogmatic purpose.

It is unreasonable, however, to suppose that the beliefs connected with worship were not modified, often radically modified, under the influence of myths. The characteristics of the greater gods in myth as enumerated above (pp. 18–19) affected the conceptions of the worshipper both directly and through the medium of worship. When the Athenians worshipped Athena as Itonia, or Hippia, or Skiras, or Hygieia, — and every cult had some such distinctive epithet — the picture of Homer's Athena, one Athena

who embodied all these forms and who was honored in all the Greek world cannot have been wholly absent from their minds. And it is inconceivable that the idea of gods human enough to sympathize with the needs and desires of men, as they appear in the literary handling of myth, should not often have lent new meaning to ritual. This human side of the gods of myth found its noblest expression in art; certainly art as well as literature was a medium through which myth affected ritual.

So far, then, as the present discussion of Greek religion is concerned, myth as such is definitely excluded; it is, however, apparent to the reader that myths will come into consideration at many points because of the light they throw on ritual itself and on the religious ideas associated with ritual.

3. **The Local Shrine.** — The contrast between religion and myth appears most sharply in connection with a conception which is fundamental to the whole structure of Greek religion, the conception of the local shrine. All Greek worship centres about these various shrines; each shrine (temple or altar) is independent of any other religious authority, and the god of each shrine is ordinarily treated as if he were independent of gods worshipped elsewhere. The local nature of Greek religion meant that there were as many religions as there were cities, or rather as many as there were individual shrines all over Greece. The first task of the student is to grasp the meaning of that multiform centre of Greek religion, the local shrine.

We may consider the local shrine first in connection with the god there worshipped. At the hundreds of points where Athena was worshipped in Greece, the goddess was never twice conceived in exactly the same manner. Even where the epithet attached to her name is the same, we have no assurance that it is really the same goddess. For instance, the Athena Itonia of one shrine is by no means identical with the Athena Itonia of another shrine. At Athens Apollo Pythios, Apollo Patroos, Apollo Agyieus, Apollo Thargelios, are practically independent beings for worship. At the one festival of the Panathenaea separate sacrifices are offered

to Athena Polias, to Athena Nikę, and to Athena Hygieia, as if they were independent gods.[1] This principle is diametrically opposed to the pictures of the gods in myth, and it is by no means easy to grasp; yet it is fundamental for the knowledge of Greek religion. Our problem, moreover, is not to determine how the gods of myth were split into these different forms, but rather to investigate how the gods of worship were brought under a few names and in myth were made definite, personal beings.[2]

The same facts may be considered from the standpoint of the city. The cults of any one city or tribe or family belong to that one social unit, and make no appeal to outsiders. In the mind of her worshippers Hera of Argos is almost as independent of Hera worshipped elsewhere, as Trophonius at Lebadeia is independent of other earth-spirits. Each cult centre in Athens is theoretically separate from every other; its forms of worship, its times of worship, its priests, are peculiar to itself. A few cult centres, it is true, are branches of important cults elsewhere,[3] but by far the greater number have no such connections. The worshippers at these shrines are indeed composed of much the same people; the priests are appointed and accounts audited by the same state; myth suggests that much the same gods are found elsewhere. Except for these somewhat external bonds of union, each cult stood alone and by itself.

We may go farther and say that each god or goddess was treated in worship much as if no other gods existed. The third book of the *Odyssey* illustrates this statement. At the sacrifice to Poseidon there is no thought of any other god; and the next day, when sacrifice is offered to Athena, there is no mention of Poseidon's existence. With another sort of animal for the sacrifice and a slightly different ritual, the entire attention of the worshipper is absorbed in another god. This state of mind may be better under-

1 "Whether Aphrodite is one person or two, *i.e.* Ourania and Pandemos, I do not know; for even Zeus, who seems to be one and the same, has many epithets added to his name." Socrates in Xenophon, *Symp.* 8. 9.

2 Cp. Rohde, *Die Religion der Griechen*, 8–9.

3 Cp. *infra*, p. 68.

stood by comparison with the worship of saints in some Catholic countries; in the worship of some one saint the other saints are forgotten and at times the thought of the Supreme Deity is obscured in the mind of the worshipper. So at Athens the different cults were mutually exclusive, while they existed amicably side by side. When Dionysus was worshipped, Athena and Artemis and

FIG. 3. — SECTION OF THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON (Athens)
Three gods (Poseidon, Apollo, and Artemis?) are represented as "guests" at the Panathenaic festival of Athena.

Poseidon may sometimes have been mentioned in prayers; at some festivals gods other than the one worshipped may have been invited to join the repast;[1] nevertheless the worshipper's attention was concentrated on one god just as truly as if no other gods existed. Without interfering at all with the polytheism of belief, worship was essentially monotheistic; or to use the term invented to describe just this state of affairs, worship was "henotheistic."

The connection of the state with these local centres of worship

[1] Compare the gods at the Panathenaic festival, as represented on the Parthenon frieze.

may better be considered along with the general question as to the connection between religion and the state. It is enough to say here that the Greeks found it a practical necessity as well as a convenient and natural procedure to supervise the temples and shrines through the state. All these centres of worship belonged to the people as a whole (or to some group of the people which the state recognized), and the benefits of worship came to the people as a whole rather than to individuals. Voluntary religious associations for the benefit of individuals were unimportant until after the fifth century B.C. So it came about that priests were appointed, temples built, and the finances supervised by the people as a whole acting through the state. Similarly religious law was administered in courts established by the state and maintained by its authority. Thus each local cult maintained the bond between the state and some one point in the world of the gods.

A more important result of the facts now under discussion was the absence of any central religious authority for belief or for practice. It is characteristic of Greek religion that its gods were accepted, not defined. The ritual of each shrine was something definite, prescribed in form, celebrated at particular times; the gods, considered as universal beings, were simply powerful spirits who demanded such worship at the different cult centres. Were it not for mythology we should know little of the gods, but perhaps we should know as much as the Greeks themselves. And it has already been pointed out that the myths were in no sense theological dogma. They contain no definitions either of the gods or of any religious truth; they were not intended to edify or to instruct; even though they were accepted as true, they were not a statement of belief. It is for this reason that the myths were free to develop along poetic lines. Nowhere else than in Greece were myths of the gods such pure products of the untrammelled imagination, nowhere else can they be studied simply as artistic productions.

The greater poets of the fifth century were not entirely content to treat the gods in this manner. In their writings we find some

attempt to define the nature of god, and the relation of man to god. More exactly there is some effort to purify myth that it may better accord with religious sentiment. Yet this end is always subordinated to the demands of the poetical ideal. Moreover, a poetic theology may have considerable influence, but it is binding not even on its creator. The attempts of philosophy to deal with theological problems belong to a much later date, and have still less significance for Greek religion. Religious phenomena were among the last to receive philosophical criticism; it is in the early history of Christian thought, rather than in Greek religion, that the reaction of philosophy on religion and the consequent development of theology may be traced. Greek religion remained to the end a religion without theology.

The real reason for the absence of dogma is found in the Greek conception of authority in religious matters. Where a priestly caste existed, it was for their interest to develop belief in their own authority or in the authority of sacred writings which were wholly in their charge. Accordingly priest-religions come to be based on an authoritative revelation of the divine will through the priests. Or even without conscious interposition by a priestly caste sacred books may gain an authority only to be explained by assuming that they are a direct revelation of the divine will. The emphasis laid on the Bible as a religious authority at the time of the Reformation has made this conception of revelation entirely familiar to the modern reader. But in Greece there was neither a class of priests nor any sacred book to serve as an authority on religious matters. That the Greek conception of revelation differed *in toto* from the conception in priest-religions and in book-religions was a necessary result (see Part I, Chap. i); we must look elsewhere to find the standard of authority for Greek religion.

The only authority for ritual or for belief in Greece was the tradition of each particular local shrine.[1] Ritual was the habit of worship at any one shrine, not codified in any rules, but passed on

[1] Tyler, *Theology of the Greek Poets*, 208 f.; cp. Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 169 and references.

with the authority of an immemorial antiquity; similarly, the only theology was the habit of thought about the god of that shrine, which was developed in its worshippers. A particular form of worship was observed primarily because such had always been the form of worship. If a reason were asked, it was readily found in the statement that what had gratified the god in the past was most likely to gratify him again. And if any change in ritual occurred, it could be justified by the claim that the expedient was successful in gratifying the god, for he continued to show his favor. Ordinarily no reason was asked; it was enough to carry on the worship as it had been carried on; in other words, the authority of religious tradition was recognized without question.

The counterpart to this proposition, however, must be stated at once. Tradition never was absolutely binding so as to preclude any change; it had authority only as a good and useful custom. In the course of time Greek thought of the gods changed, and the change was gradually reflected in the belief and practice at each shrine where they were worshipped. Quite commonly, however, these changes consisted in additions to practices already in vogue. The result is that we may detect at many cult centres the different strata of traditional practices, continuing long after their original meaning had been forgotten.

The task of the student of Greek religion is at once revealed by this state of affairs. He might be glad to learn about the origin of religion in Greece, but that question is relatively unimportant. He finds an immense mass of data as to the worship at different shrines, data concerning practices which belong to long-separated epochs and which have never been really unified. If he is able to outline a historical hypothesis which shall account for the facts at his disposal, assigning different practices to the period in which they originated and explaining the religious ideas or ideals to which they were due, his task is accomplished. The multiplicity of data, the different possible explanations, and the relatively little attention which has been given to the subject explain the lack of agreement as yet in regard to it.

Greek religion, then, was without dogma, or any other authority except the tradition of each particular shrine; before leaving this proposition, we must state certain corollaries or deductions from it. In the first place it means, as was said above, that there were as many forms of religion, if not as many different religions, as there were local shrines. It does not mean that there was not a constant interchange of ideas and even of cult-forms, as worshippers passed from one shrine to another. From the interchange of ideas and practices there gradually arose two general types of sacrifice, one a glad feast in honor of the gods who protected and prospered the state, the other a solemn rite to pacify deities who were angry or to prevent the anger of gods easily stirred to wrath.[1] But while these two types of sacrifice stand out with some distinctness, while there was a distinct tendency toward common practices and common beliefs at other points, the independent authority of each shrine remained unquestioned and at most shrines some peculiar practices were always retained.

A second corollary of the above proposition is that it was only habit, habit not enforced by any statement of its content, which tended toward unity of belief among a group of worshippers; consequently the same practices were often interpreted very differently by those who shared them. So long as the people did not ask any formulation of religious ideas, and so long as it was not for the interest of any one class of the people (*e.g.* the priests) to perform this task, it was never done. Every one was free to think of the gods as he chose. Aristophanes might make fun of them, Plato might reconstitute the idea of them entirely; it made no difference so long as public worship went on undisturbed. At a festival of Asclepius one might be a scoffer, one an implicit believer in the god's power to heal, many indifferent to anything except the custom of the city or the meat distributed at the sacrifice. We shall not look among such a people for any Hebrew prophet, any intense preacher of spiritual truth in whom the religious consciousness of the nation was focussed. On the other hand the

[1] Cp. *infra*, p. 97 f. and 105 f.

conditions favored the development of a religion which touched human life at every point, and which gave to every human ideal its personal expression in the divine world.

Finally we may note that this complete absence of dogma was most important for the evolution of religion in Greece. Perhaps there never was a people with any degree of culture whose spiritual development was more free and spontaneous. The only conservative force, a force always paramount in the history of religious phenomena, and not at all peculiar to Greece, was the force of tradition. But as ritual was passed on from one generation to another, the interpretation of the rites was easily forgotten. On the one hand a great spiritual force might be quickly dissipated; on the other hand a new spiritual impulse readily found expression either in the old rites themselves, or in some accretion to the old ritual. This quick and complete response of religion to conceptions regnant in each phase of civilization makes the history of religion a most valuable commentary on the development of the Greek people; nowhere better than in Greece can the natural evolution of religious conceptions and practices be studied, while at the same time the task which confronts the student of this religion is rendered peculiarly difficult.

**4. What did Religion mean to the Greeks?** — The question as to the significance of Greek religion is better asked at the conclusion of the chapters which follow,[1] than in an introduction to them; some consideration of the topic, however, may make the discussion of worship and belief more intelligible. Some word is the more necessary because of the emphasis which has often been laid on the investigation of the origin of religion. Perhaps the study of Greek religion has suffered unduly from this trend of modern thought, because matters seemed so clear and simple. With equal confidence the origin of the Greek gods has been assigned to a habit of deifying natural phenomena, and again to a habit of offering worship to the souls of ancestors. The worship of ancestors was a real and widespread element of Greek religion, but it

[1] Part III, Chap. iv.

remains to be proved that the worship of any single god did arise or could have arisen from this source. Similarly, the hypothesis that the Greek gods arose from some habit of deifying natural phenomena neither can be proved nor does it serve to explain the facts.

It seems clear that the Greeks did not worship physical objects, whether sun or river or growing tree or any idol. On the contrary, their religion served to people the world with superhuman beings, human in their nature and in their humanity expressing Greek thought of the world and its phenomena. Zeus was both father of gods and men, and the spirit of the sky; rain came from Zeus, the lightning was his weapon, his worship belonged naturally on high peaks, his home was on Olympus. Dionysus was the god of the vine, even so that the juice of the grape seemed to be the essence of that spirit which makes for growth in all vegetation. The dark wavy locks of Poseidon recalled the dark, tossing sea, in the depths of which were the stables of Poseidon's steeds. Yet Dionysus was a human god visiting one spot after another to bestow on men his gift of the wine; Poseidon was a boisterous spirit, lover of horses, fond of the battlefield, watching over the children borne to him by human wives. Apollo, who came to be associated with the sun, was the god of shepherds, himself once serving as a shepherd; he was the prophet who made known to men the divine will, the musician, the healer of disease. And Aphrodite, as represented in the statue found at Melos, was the most human of the gods, not a human passion deified for worship, but rather the spirit in whom was manifested human love as a fundamental principle of the universe.

If we turn from the greater gods to the world near at hand, we find the same interpretation of nature in personal, all but human, beings. The sailor sees spiritual forces in the storm or the dangerous hidden shoal; not the gods of Olympus, but spirits of the sea sympathize with him and save him in trouble. The farmer's daily work is religious in that the grain, the foes that threaten the grain, the very earth on which it grows, are animated by a nature

FIG. 4.—APHRODITE FROM MELOS (Louvre)

like his own, whose blessing he may gain by worship; these rites are indeed thrown into the shadow by the brilliancy of the Olympian worship, yet enough persists to show that the facts of farming are interpreted in terms of religion. And there are many festivals like those of Dionysus and Demeter which show that even in city life the Greeks did not lose this spiritual touch with nature.

The Greeks did not worship natural objects, but they expressed their thought of nature in spiritual beings, for the most part friendly to man, who were members of that same community to which the human world belonged. To-day the sublime and the beautiful in nature afford us aesthetic gratification as facts outside ourselves; similarly Hebrew poetry reflects a sense for the grandeur and beauty of nature; in Greek religion the attitude toward nature was very different, for in the forces there at work the Greek recognized a life like his own, with which he himself was most intimately associated. The joy of spring, the sadness of dying vegetation, are poetry for us; for the Greek they represented the joy and sadness of that community of nature in which he was an integral part. In a word, the Greeks were idealists; their religion was not a worship of nature, but a worship of spirits (almost human spirits) in nature; by peopling their world with such spirits, they made nature an intelligible, not to say a social, fact.

As for the humanity of the Greek gods, it found an almost exaggerated expression in myth. The Homeric gods exhibit human frailty and sin on the same large scale as human virtue and power. Families which claimed a history traced their descent from the gods. Not only did myths tell of the presence of gods in the society of men; we must go further and say that worship was based on the belief in such a relation as actually existing. The gods of other peoples were now more vague, now more closely bound up with objects in nature, more abstract, more to be dreaded, perhaps more lofty than the Greek gods; none stood in closer sympathy with man. It is practically true that these gods differed from man only in degree, that the king differed

from his subjects hardly less than the gods differed from men. In many religions the development of the gods was away from men toward moral or philosophical ideals; the Greek gods became more perfect only as they more perfectly expressed all the possibilities of human nature. Artemis was never so fully identified with the moon, Zeus with the sky, nor even Gaia with the earth, as to obscure in any degree their essentially human character. It is in the grain goddess Demeter that one finds the best example of the mother's love, sorrowing but finally triumphant. In worship as in myth Leto is the mother proud of her successful children, Hera the queenly wife, Persephone the gentle daughter, Artemis the maiden loving wild nature,—each stands out a personality because she personifies so clearly some human relation.

It is from this standpoint that one may best understand the relation to religion of such human ideals as the ideal of beauty and of morality. As beings intimately related to man, the gods shared the Greek impulse toward the beautiful. And this means not merely that the highest expression of the artist's power was found in the creation of divine images, and in the erection of suitable homes for the gods represented by these images. It does certainly mean that even traditions of ancient holy objects must eventually yield to the power of a Pheidias to give some adequate conception of the physical beauty of the gods. It means that the temple, the home of the god, must be the most perfect building that could be erected. We may even go so far as to say that the principle of beauty was what largely determined Greek thought as to the character and the rule of the gods. The unity and symmetry of their personality, the graciousness of their nature, the kindly spirit of their relations to each other and to men, are a reflection of that aesthetic ideal which was so dominant in Greek life. And the world was beautiful, the physical world and the social world, for its unity and order came from the gods.[1]

The connection between religion and morality may be dismissed for the present with the statement that the gods were moral beings

[1] See Part III, Chap. i.

only in the sense that men were moral beings. It was characteristic of the Greek mind not to judge human life and activity by stern moral standards. The consciousness of right and wrong did not enter into every human act. And the gods were human enough so that they could not be conceived as the embodiment of moral ideals, or indeed as beings which never transgressed moral law. Their rule was on the whole righteous, nor was more demanded of a king or a god in Greece before the days of philosophers and theologians.

Nowhere does the essentially human nature of the Greek gods, and at the same time their relation to the physical world, come out more clearly than in the consideration of the "divine government" of the world. These gods did not create the world out of nothing, for man has no such mysterious faculty which he could transfer from himself to the gods. The existence of matter was assumed; and as it was man's task to subdue physical agencies to serve human ends, so it belonged to the gods to bring the physical world under the rule of reason. So Poseidon granted safety to sailors; Athena and Hephaestus taught men the arts and crafts; and Demeter showed them how to cultivate the grain. Yet it was in the social world, in the relations of men to each other and to the community, that the rule of the greater gods was most clearly manifest. The activities of the gods, as men came in contact with them, were not universal forces, but particular acts which ordinarily had in view some particular end. The relation of the gods to each other in their rule of the world was like the relation of members in some human council, in that the social unity of such a council came to express the essential unity of the city they governed. That the sway of reason in the world and consequently the unity of the world was to be an achievement, that the gods belonged in the same society with men working together toward this common goal, and that men might therefore look for the particular aid of the gods in every phase of human activity, — such were the principles of divine government as conceived by the Greeks.

The general significance of worship in Greece is quite in line with what has been said as to the nature of the gods and the character of their rule. Among primitive peoples religious ritual is the effort to drive away or to control for good the mysterious forces in the world; and the method is ordinarily what we should call magic, though at times there is found something like barter between men and spirits. Magic was not at all foreign to Greek thought, but it was entirely foreign to the worship of the greater gods. On the other hand, it was quite possible for Plato[1] to describe piety as a sort of trade between men and gods, or as a knowledge of the right way to ask for what one wants and to give the gods in exchange what they want; although one must be blinder than Euthyphro, if he fails to see Plato's satire. Worship, in truth, was no more magic or barter than it was purely spiritual adoration.

The only standpoint from which worship can be understood is found in the distinct recognition that the gods were superior members of that same society in which men live. For Greek worship is no less human than the Greek gods. That the symposium after the banquet should begin and end with prayer; that the chief function of religion should be no painful rite, no long and tedious service, no task of the intellect, but a joyous feast on sacrificed flesh; that comedy and tragedy should develop in connection with the religion of Dionysus; that art should be so human in its service of the gods; that even gymnastic contests and horse-racing should come within the pale of religion, — all this is so far from our conception of divine worship as at first to puzzle and confuse the student. The key to the puzzle is simply that every side of man found expression in this human religion. Political assemblies began with worship that was no empty form; for the gods cared for the state just as did its citizens. Marriage and the bringing up of children was at every point under the protection of the gods. Needing bread and wine, men worshipped Demeter

[1] *Euthyphro*, 14 E; *Politicus*, 290 D; cp. *C.I.A.* I. 397 (Kaibel, *Epigr. graec.* 753).

and Dionysus; needing health, Asclepius; needing care for their flocks, Apollo or Hermes or Pan. For a knowledge of the future they could consult the oracles. With the thought of death before them, they listened to the invitation to the mysteries where they might obtain the blessing of the queen of the dead. While it is universally true that religion arises to meet human need, perhaps nowhere is this need met at so many points and in so purely human a manner as in Greece.

The conception of the gods as higher members of the same social world with man involves a double idea of the nature of worship; it was only right in the first place for men to pay divine rulers their due, and secondly it was reasonable to seek connection with the gods. Both in the practice of bringing to the gods votive offerings of some intrinsic value, and in the usual forms of sacrifice, the gods were treated in much the same manner as human rulers. From this point of view worship might be described baldly as a tax paid to the gods to insure the continuance of their favor to their subjects. The difference between barter and a tax paid to the gods lies in the fact that barter presupposes some equality between the two parties, while a tax involves a recognition of the ruler's superiority. Further, the ancient idea of taxation makes it something very different from the businesslike transaction familiar to us. The Athenian words for the few extraordinary taxes paid by full citizens were εἰσφορά and λειτουργία, the first a "contribution" paid only in the stress of war, the second a "service" which in theory (though not in practice) was voluntarily performed by such citizens as possessed sufficient property. It is in fact the second of these words, λειτουργία (English, *liturgy*), which was at times used as a name for worship. We may say with entire truth, then, that worship was like that form of taxation with which the Athenians were familiar, in that it was a voluntary gift which was rightly expected from men on certain occasions.

While this conception of worship applies especially to votive offerings, the second idea is predominant in the common type of sacrifice. The normal form of worship at a festival of any god

consisted first in processions and secondly in a common meal shared alike by the god and his worshippers. The procession was no whit different from such triumphal processions as have been familiar to European thought from the greater days of Rome on till the present. At Athens a great concourse of men, headed by priests and carrying sacred utensils, brought honor both to the city and to its gods as it slowly made its way to the place of worship. And the use of the common meal as a form of worship is not entirely foreign to our thought, for it is perpetuated in the Lord's Supper of the Christian church. Only, the point emphasized in Greece was not so much the sacredness of the food as the belief that a common meal renewed the vital bond of union between the god and his worshippers. Among other peoples the effort for union with a deity appears oftentimes in forms strange and fanatical; in Greece that phase of religion is ordinarily kept in the background by the national sense of proportion. The connection with the gods which was secured by worship was primarily a social matter, the same sort of bond which united any two persons in the common pleasure of a banquet. Music and dance together with food and wine emphasized the belief that the god and his worshippers were united in one society; and the connection with the gods then became a matter of actual experience.

The meaning of a religion depends primarily on the need it satisfies. It may be essentially spiritual and mystic in its answer to vague longings, or ethical in that it expresses a stern command of duty; it may be aesthetic, giving form to ideals of beauty, or philosophical, when men seek for absolute truth as their pearl of great price. All these tendencies appear, the ethical least of them all, in Greek religion. Its most important appeal to men, however, was on the social side. Facing strange facts and mighty forces, the Greek sought for a sympathetic chord in them; and he found it as his imagination peopled the world with gods. To use the happy phrase of Mr. Dickinson, religion "made him at home in the world."

"All that is unintelligible in the world . . . has been drawn, as it were, from its dark retreat, clothed in radiant form, and presented to the mind as a glorified image of itself. Every phenomenon of nature, night and 'rosy-fingered dawn,' earth and sun, winds, rivers and seas, sleep and death — all have been transformed into divine and conscious agents, to be propitiated by prayer, interpreted by divination, and comprehended by passions and desires identical with those which stir and control mankind." . . . "There were other powers, equally strange, dwelling in man's own heart. . . . With these too he felt the need to make himself at home, and these too, to satisfy his need, he shaped into creatures like himself. . . . In Aphrodite, mother of Eros, he incarnated the passion of love, . . . in Arés the lust of war, in Athene wisdom, in Apollo music and the arts." And thus religion made him "at home in the world."[1]

It is perhaps necessary to repeat the statement that the Greeks did not worship natural objects. Where we interpret the facts and processes of nature as a mechanical system, the Greek made them part of his social system. Danger was made intelligible, solitude filled with consciousness, human life enriched with new meaning, in that the world became a great society in which man might find his true home.

[1] G. Lowes Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, p. 7, 8.

# PART I

# FORMS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND PRACTICE IN ANCIENT GREECE

## CHAPTER I

### REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

**1. The Greek Conception of Revelation.** — The fundamental difference between the conception of revelation in Greek religion and in Christianity lies in the fact that the Greeks, like most other races, assumed the existence of the gods, formed their notions of the divine character by making the gods in their own image, and looked to special revelation only as the source of practical guidance.[1] When a colony was to be founded, the god at Delphi would be consulted as to the best time and the best place; the omens for battle must be favorable, or the battle was delayed; the sick and suffering looked for divine direction as to means of cure; a sneeze or a chance word expressed the approval of the gods, while an ominous dream deterred or encouraged the dreamer in his undertakings. Though signs and prophets and oracles were not regarded as revealing the nature of the gods, they yet were part of the apparatus of religion. In the history of Greek religion they are to be considered because of the light they throw incidentally on the character of the gods, the religious nature of man, and the divine government of the world, as these were conceived by the Greeks.

For the study of religious antiquities it is convenient to divide the subject according to the nature of the signs; signs from birds or dreams which occur without human intervention would belong

[1] See Introduction, p. 28.

to one class, signs sought by consulting the entrails of a victim or answers sought from an oracle would belong to a second class. But from the standpoint of religion this difference is merely accidental. It is more important to note how the knowledge of the future is obtained, than whether it comes sought or unsought. Signs in the external world presuppose that the course of nature and of human history is in the hands of the gods, directed by them in such wise that learned men can ascertain their will from it. On the other hand, the mind of the dreamer, the prophet, the Pythian priestess, is immediately influenced by the will of the gods, so that under this inspiration the human mind gains new power to see what would otherwise be hidden. Divination by signs was called by the Stoics[1] "artificial" or scientific, in that success rested upon a developed science of signs. Inspiration of prophets was called natural, or "without art," for the results came directly without any intervention of human learning. The history of religion accepts this division, not because of the presence or absence of human science, but because the presupposition as to the working of the gods is different in the two cases.

NOTE. — In this chapter, as in the chapter on sacrifice and worship, the data from the Homeric poems are separated to some extent from the data obtained from other authors. The reader should bear in mind that this course is not followed because the Homeric poems are more important than other sources, or because they represent an earlier stage in the development of religion. The Greeks themselves assigned a unique place to the epic; sometimes they consciously modified their religious views to accord with it; far more often they unconsciously yielded to its influence. Again, on the other hand, the nature of the poetry is such that data from this source can only be used with caution and with allowance for some special peculiarities. Under these circumstances it has seemed wise to separate the discussion of the epic, wherever possible, from the general treatment under each theme.

**2. Theophany in the Homeric Poems.** — In the later historical period visions of the gods, except in dreams, are not supposed

[1] (Plutarch) *De vita Homeri*, 212, p. 456; Cicero, *De divinatione*, 1. 18/34, 49/119; 2. 11/226.

to occur; the tendency toward what was rational or "matter of fact" led the Greek mind to look in other directions for the manifestation of the divine will. The epic, starting with the assumption that its heroes were separated from the gods by only two or three generations, made large use of direct visions of the gods. Granted that Aeneas is the son of Aphrodite, Achilles of Thetis, Sarpedon of Zeus, granted that the line of Priam in Troy, of Idomeneus in Crete, of Agamemnon in Mycenae is to be traced directly back to Zeus, it is clear that in the "good old times" no barrier separated men and gods. As gods had so recently favored mortal men and women with their love, so in the time of the siege of Troy they watched over their favorites and appeared occasionally to warn them of danger or guide them in perplexity.[1]

"Not to all men do the gods appear visibly,"[2] nor do all the gods deign to come so close to men. Zeus and Hera, generally Poseidon, remain on Olympus; Iris and Hermes are common messengers to men, while Athena and Apollo appear at times in order to carry out their plans or the plans of Zeus. In those parts of the poems assigned to an earlier date, the gods appear more commonly as gods. The angry Achilles feels the hand of Athena on his auburn hair and hears her rebuking voice, just as later he hears her word that the hour has come for him to kill Hector.[3] Each message is but the expression of Achilles' own thought; the goddess is felt and heard, but apparently she is not seen by others or even by Achilles himself. Again the gods assume the form of a man, often a man known to people to whom they go. Aphrodite comes as an old woman, Apollo as Agenor, Poseidon as Calchas;[4] in the first books of the *Odyssey* Athena comes to Telemachus as Mentes, and later as Mentor accompanies him on his journey. This type of theophany plays a large part especially in the *Odyssey*. Thirdly, in a few instances, the gods come directly on to the battlefield; Aphrodite is wounded by Diomedes till her divine blood flows, Ares is dazed by a blow of

[1] *Odyssey*, 3. 375 f.
[2] *Odyssey*, 16. 161.
[3] *Iliad*, 1. 197; 22. 215.
[4] *Iliad*, 3. 386; 21. 600; 13. 45.

Athena, Apollo shouts so loud as to frighten back the Greeks.[1] This third type may be dismissed with the statement that the gods are made ridiculous to amuse the poet's audience. The second type represents a successful attempt to bring the gods on the stage with other characters of the epic drama. The first type alone is the direct expression of religious feeling.

The study of all such appearances of the gods shows that this motif of the epic poet did have its basis in religion. Except as his audience believed that the gods were really near to men, that the gods did care for individual men and could bless or injure them by changing the course of events, it would have been idle for the poet even to make fun of the gods by bringing them into his song. He rarely tried to make the gods ridiculous; ordinarily he succeeded in his effort to make real gods genuine actors in his story. The influence of the epic practice is seen in the Attic drama, where occasionally the gods are brought on the stage.

**3. Signs in the Ordinary Course of Nature.** — Except in the case of armies preparing for battle, signs in the ordinary course of nature were more important than signs secured by divination. The Greeks paid special attention to meteorological phenomena and (in earlier times) to the flight of birds. In the *Iliad* thunder and lightning indicated the will of Zeus, god of the sky. Sometimes the occurrence of these phenomena caused fear to both Greeks and Trojans; more commonly the unsuccessful side was frightened, the successful side encouraged, by such a token of the presence of Zeus.[2] A thunderbolt in front of the horses of Diomedes stopped his victorious advance.[3] Lightning on the right hand signified definitely the favor of Zeus.[4] The only mention of thunder as a sign of approval is when Odysseus's prayer for a favorable sign was answered by a thunderbolt.[5] The same causes which in myth made the thunderbolt the attribute of Zeus, led the epic poets to emphasize this sign of the presence

[1] *Iliad*, 5. 339 f.; 21. 406 f.; 4. 508.
[2] *Iliad*, 7. 478; 17. 595.
[3] *Iliad*, 8. 133.
[4] *Iliad*, 9. 236.
[5] *Odyssey*, 20. 100 f.

and favor of Zeus. He is the god of the sky and the divine ruler of the world; naturally he signifies his will to man by phenomena in the sky. It is not entirely clear whether the epic poet made this deduction himself, or whether there was in some localities a vivid belief in the significance of thunder and lightning. The Athenian sacred embassy to Delphi waited for lightning from Zeus Astrapaios before setting out, and Xenophon alludes to lightning as a veritable sign;[1] other references to it are almost wholly lacking in later literature.

Other meteorological phenomena influenced men who were rated as superstitious. An eclipse of the moon so affected Nicias that he did not withdraw the Athenian army before Syracuse; Pelopidas, on the other hand, was not himself influenced by an eclipse of the sun.[2] Some claimed that a meteor foretold the Spartan victory at Aegospotami, and that later a comet predicted the downfall of Sparta from her primacy in Greece.[3] At Athens the assembly was dissolved whenever rain indicated that Zeus was not propitious. An earthquake in Delos is said to have been the forerunner of the Peloponnesian war.[4] It is clear that only the superstitious paid much attention to this class of signs; men generally looked elsewhere to ascertain the will of the gods. Further, it should not be forgotten that the science of astrology found little or no place in Greece.

Nor did other portents or prodigies receive great emphasis with thinking men. Herodotus and Plutarch collected stories of portentous marvels, a priestess who grew a beard, fish that leaped in the frying-pan, divine images that moved or shed drops of perspiration,—stories uncommon enough to show a general absence of superstition.[5] The seer Lampon prophesied the future greatness of Pericles from a ram with one horn, but Anaxagoras, cutting open the head, showed why only one horn

[1] Xenophon, *Apol.* 12; cp. Bacchylides, 17. 55.

[2] Plutarch, *Nicias*, 23, p. 538; *De superstitione*, 8, p. 169; *Pelopidas*, 31, p. 295.

[3] Plutarch, *Lysander*, 12, p. 439; Diodorus Siculus, 15. 50.

[4] Thucydides, 2. 8. 3.; Herodotus, 6. 98; Xenophon, *Hell.* 3 2. 24.

[5] Herodotus, 1. 175, 9. 120; Plutarch, *Nicias*, 13, p. 531; *Timoleon*, 12, p. 241.

had grown.[1] Such a scientific spirit was not favorable to belief in portents.

**4. Signs in Nature: Birds.** — In the Homeric poems the most important method for learning the will of the gods, was to observe the flight of birds; the most important function of the prophet was to interpret signs from birds. Their freedom from human control, their access to the sky where lived the gods, the connection which was assumed between particular birds and particular gods — all contributed to their significance. Not, of course, that all birds were harbingers of future events; it was the eagle of Zeus, the hawk of Apollo, the heron flying at night, which intimated the plans of the gods.[2] Often the mere presence of an eagle on the right hand (toward the east) was enough, especially when it came in answer to prayer.[3] The eagle with a goose in its talons or the hawk with a dove signified success when it appeared on the right; yet even such a sign might be disregarded when the course of events tended the other way.[4] That Troy should be taken in the tenth year was indicated by the sparrow and her eight young devoured by a serpent.[5] At times the act of the bird was a definite type of the event, as when Apollo's hawk is seen scattering the feathers of a dove, or when the eagle of Zeus kills the geese eating grain in Odysseus's hall.[6] Calchas and Halitherses, who interpret such signs, are the great seers of the poems. Other evidence may be brought to show that here the epic belief is based on real practice, while it can hardly be doubted that the emphasis laid on bird-signs in the epic tended to increase the importance attached to them in fact.

Prometheus, in the play of Aeschylus, claims to have taught men to discern the flight of taloned birds, which are favorable, which unfavorable, and to understand their habits, their quarrels,

[1] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 6, p. 154.
[2] *Odyssey*, 2. 146; 15. 525, 532; *Iliad*, 24. 315; 10. 274.
[3] *Iliad*, 13. 821; 24. 292; *Odyssey*, 24. 311.
[4] *Odyssey*, 15. 160; 20. 242; *Iliad*, 8. 247; 12. 200 f.
[5] *Iliad*, 2. 308 f.
[6] *Odyssey*, 15. 525 f.; 19. 536 f.

their mating.[1] The eagle, the vulture, and the crow were specially significant, rather for their dominant cruel habits than for any connection with one particular god. Their appearance in the east, or their flight toward the east, was in itself favorable.[2] Seers like Teiresias are said to have had a regular place where they

FIG. 5.—ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING

Above a four-horse chariot (driven by a goddess) appears an eagle flying.

might observe the appearance or the conflicts of birds of prey.[3] Two eagles tearing a hare with its young signified for the Greeks the utter destruction of Troy by the army which Agamemnon and Menelaus led; similarly the Persian queen Atossa feared for the great army of Xerxes when she saw a hawk pursuing an eagle and plucking feathers from its head as the eagle flew toward the shrine of Apollo.[4] While omens from birds were undoubtedly important in some localities in early times, in the greater days of Greece they became rather a part of the poet's apparatus. The increasing importance of oracles and of an organized, unified system of reli-

1 Aeschylus, *Prom.* 488 f.
2 Cp. Plato, *Leg.* 6, p. 760 D.
3 Sophocles, *Ant.* 999; Euripides, *Bacch.* 347.
4 Aeschylus, *Agam.* 114 f.; *Pers.* 205 f.

gious practice tended to eclipse the simple observance of natural signs.

**5. Minor Signs in Nature: Chance Words, etc.** — Just as lightning and the flight of birds suggest the intervention of the gods, for here human life comes in contact with what cannot be foreseen or calculated, so the rumor which starts no one knows where, and gains in certainty and definiteness no one knows how, comes to be regarded as the messenger of Zeus to man. When Agamemnon proposed to test the temper of his army by suggesting that they abandon the siege of Troy and return home, it was Rumor, messenger of Zeus, which urged them to accept his suggestion; Athena, in the form of Mentes, bade Telemachus look to Rumor for news of his father; so Rumor spread the word that the suitors had been killed.[1]

Again, the chance word, suggesting to the hearer something totally different from what was intended by the speaker, was often regarded as a sign. When Zeus answered Odysseus's prayer for a sign by sending a thunderbolt, Odysseus overheard the comment of women grinding at the mill.[2] It was mere comment for them to say that Zeus was about to punish the suitors; to Odysseus it seemed that Zeus had first sent the thunderbolt, then had given him the interpretation of its meaning. Such chance words or chance happenings seem always to have influenced superstitious persons in Greece. Cyrus hailed it as an omen when he was told that the watchword was "Preserver Zeus and victory"; the Greeks were encouraged to fight at Mycale by the name of the Samian messenger, Hegesistratus, "Army-leader"; and when Alexander forced the Pythian priestess to mount the tripod at an unusual time, her exclamation that he could not be resisted was all the oracle he asked for.[3] Pausanias speaks of oracles which depended on the first chance word one heard after sacrificing to the god.[4]

[1] *Iliad*, 2. 93; *Odyssey*, 1. 282; 24. 413.

[2] *Odyssey*, 20. 105; cp. 2. 35; 18. 117.

[3] Xenophon, *Anab.* 1. 8. 16; Herodotus, 9. 91; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 14, p. 671.

[4] Pausanias, 7. 22. 3; 9. 11. 7.

Such an interpretation of chance words does not seem so strange, when one recalls that not many years ago the Bible was used in much the same way: to obtain guidance the book was opened at random and perhaps in the last word on the page was sought a suggestion of the right course. An example of chance events regarded as signs occurs in Plutarch:[1] an army advancing to meet the enemy were discouraged by the sight of asses laden with parsley, for parsley was used to make crowns for the dead. A sneeze, on the other hand, was favorable; as Xenophon spoke of the hope of safety, a soldier sneezed, and the army accepted it as a good omen from Zeus.[2]

The theory of these signs, in so far as any theory may be assumed, is definitely religious. It is assumed that all nature is under the direction of the gods, and that the gods wish to guide men by giving them some indications of their favor or disapproval. Omens are sought in events not easily explained by natural causes; they are vague, in order that responsibility may still be left with men; their range increases rapidly with superstitious men; the sense of their reality and importance, however, rests on the deep-set belief that the gods wish to guide men by signs in nature. Because the gods are consistent, experience is the source of principles by which signs can be correctly interpreted.

**6. Divination by means of Sacrificial Victims.** — In the fifth and fourth centuries divination from the flight of birds had all but passed out of use and signs in nature were only occasionally noted; the will of the gods was ascertained by the consultation of oracles or by divination in connection with sacrificial victims. Whether this means of divination existed in early times and was passed over by the epic,[3] or was introduced later; whether it was developed from the Greek religious consciousness, or adopted from other nations, it is not easy to say. In any case its meaning is

[1] Plutarch, *Timoleon*, 26, p. 248.

[2] Xenophon, *Anab.* 3. 2. 9; cp. Aristophanes, *Aves*, 720.

[3] The word θυοτκόος (*e.g. Iliad*, 24. 221) according to the usage of the epic seems to mean no more than "attendant at the sacrifice."

found in the belief that animals sacrificed to the gods must be perfect; if they come unwillingly to the altar, if the inner parts are deformed or discolored, if the sacrifice does not burn properly, then it is a bad omen, for the gods are displeased.

On this theory any sacrifice may have prophetic import. The priest, sometimes a special seer, is on the lookout for tokens sig-

FIG. 6. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Gotha)

A servant carefully watches the roasting meat, while Nike fills the priest's phiale for a libation, in the presence of Apollo with a cithara.

nificant of the divine will. If the bull "comes boldly to the altar as though led of the gods," and perhaps bows its own head to the blow,[1] heaven favors the worshippers; even if the result is brought about by the skill of the priest, it is interpreted in the same way; but for an animal to die on the way to the altar forebodes some dreadful evil.[2] Then after the victim is opened, the character of

[1] Aeschylus, *Agam.* 1298; cp. Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 24, p. 507; Paton-Hicks, *Inscriptions of Cos*, 37, l. 21.

[2] Schol. on Aristophanes, *Pax*, 960; Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 6, p. 386.

the liver and gall bladder is most significant. A sound liver, smooth, of good color, and with well-shaped lobes, means that the sacrifice is acceptable and that the god is ready to grant the wishes of the worshipper.[1] As the sacrifice is burning on the altar, the manner in which the flame envelops the moist meat also indicates the attitude of the gods;[2] when

> "Hephaestus's flame
> Shone not from out the offering; but there oozed
> Upon the ashes, trickling from the bones,
> A moisture, and it smouldered, and it spat,
> And, lo! the gall was scattered to the air,
> And forth from out the fat that wrapped them round
> The thigh bones fell,"

then "evil falls upon the State."[3] The bursting of the gall bladder, and the behavior of the bones at the base of the tail (ὀσφύς), were especially significant.[4] Many of the passages that may be cited in regard to divination from sacrificial victims do not refer to sacrifices offered for this purpose, but to occurrences in connection with the regular worship (θυσία). Now the priest himself, now the king or general interpreted such omens, or again a seer might be needed.[5] The explanation of the procedure is very simple: since an imperfect sacrifice must fail of its end, the gods need only direct the course of events so that the animal was imperfect or the fire did not burn properly, when they desired to indicate their disapproval of the worshipper or his plans.

What has been said of ordinary sacrifices applies with all the more force to special sacrifices in the presence of danger. Before a battle, a dangerous march, or any difficult undertaking, it was the practice of the Greeks to offer (in addition to the regular sacrifice) a peculiar sacrifice to propitiate the possible wrath of

1 Aeschylus, *Prom.* 493 f.; Xenophon, *Hell.* 3. 4. 15; Plutarch, *Cimon*, 18, p. 490. Cp. Virgil, *Aen.* 4. 64.

2 Aeschylus, *Prom.* 498; Euripides, *Phoen.* 1255 f. and scholion.

3 Sophocles, *Ant.* 1006 f., trans. Plumptre; Apollonius Rhodius, 1. 436 f.

4 Sophocles, *Ant.* 1009; Schol. on Aristophanes, *Pax*, 1053.

5 Xenophon, *Anab.* 2. 2. 3; 5. 5. 3.

the gods and secure their special favor (σφάγια).[1] The marks of divine approval or disapproval were the same as in connection with ordinary sacrifices; only, for the very reason that these were propitiatory rites in the face of danger, the general and the seer watched them with so much the greater care. The importance of this method of divination, especially in the case of an army, lay in the fact that it furnished a speedy and reliable means of ascertaining the purposes of the gods before battle. The position of the seer in the army was only less important than that of the general; the seer's advice could be rejected, but, as at the battle of Plataea, it was customary to suffer some losses rather than to send the soldiers into battle without the belief that the gods were on their side.[2] In case the omens were unfavorable, the attack might be given up entirely.[3] However, the practice grew up of repeating these sacrifices until the omens were favorable.[4] Of course it was always conceivable that the seer might be mistaken; he might even wish to deceive the general and ruin his plans, so that it was desirable for the general himself to know something of hieroscopy.[5]

The theory of these special sacrifices was very simple. In case any god or hero were angry with the army or offended by some neglect, he would cause them disaster. Accordingly, propitiatory sacrifices were offered, in the belief that if the sacrifice were accepted, the general might be confident that the gods would help him. Then the sacrifice could be repeated, for unfavorable omens might mean only that the time had not come which the gods wished to designate as favorable. It is a narrow line that separates religiousness from superstition at this point; still, it is probably fair to regard the practice of divination by sacrifice in the fifth century B.C. as based on a real faith in divine intervention.

[1] Herodotus, 9. 41; 9. 61 f.; Xenophon, *Anab.* 1. 8. 15; 6. 5. 21.

[2] Xenophon, *Laced. rep.* 13. 3; Pausanias, 3. 11. 6; Herodotus, 9. 33 f.; Xenophon, *Hell.* 4. 6. 10.

[3] Herodotus, 6. 76; Thucydides, 5. 54.

[4] Herodotus, 9. 61; Xenophon, *Anab.* 6. 4. 17; *Hell.* 3. 1. 17; Plutarch, *Aristides*, 17–18, p. 329.

[5] Xenophon, *Anab.* 5. 6. 29; *Cyrop.* 1. 6. 2; Plato, *Laches*, 199 A.

**7. Inspiration: (*a*) Dreams.** — In contrast with the revelation of the divine will through signs in the external world, we find a knowledge of the future that is gained by inspiration. Gods differ from men in that their vision is not necessarily limited by the *here* and the *now*; the gods are but human spirits with superior powers; it is a natural inference that occasionally men may see beyond the limitations of the present into the future. Such superhuman gifts, when they are found in human beings, are naturally connected with those classes of mental phenomena that are not readily explained. In sleep the ordinary channels of perception seem to be closed; the mind seems to wander at liberty; in Greece no less than elsewhere dreams were regarded as portending future events. Occasionally an individual, a blind man perhaps or some one endowed with unusually sensitive nature, is credited with a knowledge not possessed by the common crowd. Or, again, the apparatus of religion is organized to obtain responses to the questioner, and we have the oracle. I use the word *inspiration* to cover these three types, not because the Greeks had any such clear-cut belief as the early Hebrews that a divine spirit overmastered the mind of the prophet, but rather because we have no better word to indicate that we are dealing with a knowledge of the future which is assigned to the mind itself, independent of any events in the external world.

Just because it is so natural to regard dreams as portentous, because there is nothing "magical" about them, they find a considerable place in the Homeric poems. Their value is explained by ascribing them to the gods, their treacherousness by saying that they are often sent to deceive. "Twain are the gates of shadowy dreams, the one is fashioned of horn and one of ivory. Such dreams as pass through the portals of sawn ivory are deceitful, and bear tidings that are unfulfilled. But the dreams that come forth through the gates of polished horn bring a true issue, whosoever of mortals beholds them."[1] To make dreams concrete and definite, they are described as visions in sleep. Achilles has a

[1] *Odyssey*, 19. 562 f. trans. Butcher and Lang.

vision of Patroclus urging the burial of his body; Penelope sees her sister standing over her and bidding her cease her tears, or, again, she sees a sign of birds and hears its explanation.[1] In some instances the gods appear to men in dreams, just as they appear to waking men, ordinarily in the form of some friend whose presence is not unexpected.[2] Or the dream may take the form of a sign, such as waking men see; so Penelope dreams that an eagle slays the geese devouring grain at her hearth.[3] In both forms of dreams, great stress is laid on the feeling that they are real visions.

In later times Greek students of nature recognized that dreams were often determined by the state of the body; Aristotle[4] went so far as to say definitely that dreams do not come from the gods; in general, however, men maintained that some dreams had supernatural meaning. Just as the Homeric poems distinguished true and false dreams, so Aeschylus represents Prometheus as teaching men to distinguish what were true and what false.[5] The science of dreams, thus initiated by Prometheus, grew in importance; Lysimachus, nephew of the great Aristeides, was but one of a host of men who expounded dreams for the superstitious; and in course of time elaborate treatises on the subject were published, some of which are still extant.[6] Although interpreters of dreams were sometimes classed with seers and prophets as men gifted by the gods with superhuman insight, the more general view was that they were students of the science of dreams who interpreted dreams on the basis of experience.

In general the dreams recorded in Greek literature are, like Penelope's dream of the slaughtered geese, simply signs appearing in sleep. When Xenophon dreamed that lightning from Zeus struck his father's house, it was a sign which he could interpret either as favorable or unfavorable. The mother of Phalaris

[1] *Iliad*, 23. 65; *Odyssey*, 4. 796 f.; 19. 535 f.

[2] Cp. the second type of theophany, *supra*, p. 41.

[3] *Odyssey*, 19. 536 f.

[4] Aristotle, *De insomniis*, 2.

[5] *Iliad*, 1. 63; 2. 6; cp. *Odyssey*, 19. 561; 20. 90; Aeschylus, *Prom.* 485 f.

[6] Hippocrates, 1. 633, *De insomniis*; Artemidorus, *Oneir.*

dreamed that an image of Hermes in the house poured out blood from a cup, and the whole house boiled with blood, — a sign of her son's life of cruelty.[1] Socrates inferred the day of his death from the dream of a woman quoting Homer, "on the third day thou shalt come to fertile Phthia"; dreams also foretold by signs to Polycrates and to Cimon that they were about to die.[2]

The explanation of dreams offered by the Greeks is more important for the student of religion than their form or content. Nor is he interested in the mythical statements of the poets, that they are children of Night or of Earth.[3] In Homer dreams are sent by direct act of the greater gods. That the divine origin of dreams is denied by Aristotle, and affirmed of some dreams by Herophilus,[4] indicates that the view continued to be held in later times. The more general belief is presented in a striking fragment of Pindar; speaking of the soul, the "image of life" which alone continues to exist after death, he establishes its immortality on the ground that this "alone is from the gods; it sleeps while the limbs of the body are active, but when they sleep it gives in dreams clear knowledge of future joys and troubles."[5] Plato makes large place for dreams in which man's lower nature, his passions and desires, are controlling, while reason is inactive; at the same time he maintains that the man in whom reason is wont to rule may have the power of divination when sleep frees the soul from the bonds of the body.[6] Such became the widely current view of Greek thinkers. The body is a hindrance or limitation to the divine spirit which inhabits it. In death the limitation disappears; in sleep, as at the moment of death, the soul feels this limitation far less, and can recall the past or foresee the future with clear vision.[7] Dreams and prophetic inspiration rest on the same basis.

1 Cicero, *De divin.* 1. 23/46.
2 Plato, *Crito*, 44 B; Herodotus, 3. 124; Plutarch, *Cimon*, 18, p. 490.
3 Hesiod, *Theog.* 211; Euripides, *Iph. Taur.* 1262.
4 Plutarch, *De placitis*, 5. 2, p. 904 F.
5 Pindar, *Frag.* 108 (Bergk); cp. Aeschylus, *Eum.* 104.
6 Plato, *Politia*, 9, 571 C; *Timaeus*, 71 D.
7 Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 8. 7. 21; Cicero, *De divin.* 1. 30/63.

**8. Inspiration: (*b*) Prophets.** — In the Homeric poems the prophet or seer is a man gifted by the gods to discern things beyond the reach of ordinary perception. Teiresias retains in Hades his prophetic gift along with his other mental powers, by the special favor of Persephone; at the request of Odysseus he warns him of future dangers, recounts the state of affairs at Ithaca, and indicates the means of propitiating Poseidon. His prophetic power consists in a "knowledge of the ancient divine decrees," decrees in which the ultimate safety of Odysseus is assured, though the fate of his companions depends on their observance of the prophet's warning.[1] Such vision of what is far away, or in the future, is regarded as a gift of the gods. Just as Hera put it in the mind of Agamemnon to stir up the Greeks against the enemy, so the immortals made known the future to their favorites, so Helenus knew the purpose of the gods and Apollo granted the gift of prophecy to Calchas.[2] Sometimes this knowledge comes in answer to prayer, more often the favor of the god grants it without any request. That it is the direct gift of the Olympians is in harmony with the epic conception of these divine rulers; that it is definite, though somewhat limited, is perhaps to be explained by the fact that within the general course of events the gods left many choices open to men.

Although some direct knowledge of the future is assigned to prophets in the epic, their more important task is to interpret dreams, signs, and omens. To the ordinary man these signs were sometimes clear; it required the art of Calchas, however, to interpret the sign at Aulis which portended the ten years' siege of Troy[3]; and as a rule the prophet would find more meaning in a sign and expound it with greater authority. For this reason, the army going to Troy had its official seer, Calchas; Telemus declared the divine decrees to the Cyclopes; even the suitors in the house of Odysseus had both bard and seer.[4]

[1] *Odyssey*, 11. 139; cp. 10. 473.
[2] *Iliad*, 8. 218; 7. 44 (and 53); 1. 72 and 385. Cp. *Odyssey*, 1. 201.
[3] *Iliad*, 2. 322 f.
[4] *Odyssey*, 9. 507 f.; 22. 318 f.

In addition to these "official" prophets, wandering soothsayers and seers are occasionally mentioned. Such Penelope summoned to her halls in her desire to learn of Odysseus.[1] Prophet, physician, and carpenter are classed together as skilled craftsmen.[2] When prophecy thus becomes a trade pursued for gain, it is natural that the suitors in the house of the absent Odysseus should discredit it, and that Agamemnon should accuse Calchas of foretelling only what is evil.[3]

It is only fair to credit in part to the ideals of the poet that somewhat elevated conception of the seer which is found in the Homeric poems. Prophecy was a trade, but this is only incidentally mentioned; no doubt ecstatic rites were often practised, but Homer does not allude to them; the interpretation of signs rested largely on experience, but the epic lays no stress on this fact; prophecies must have been either vague or often unfulfilled, but in the poems they show a clear vision of the future. The epic conception of prophecy is distinct and definite: the gods graciously accord to men they love a clear insight into the divine purposes; because he is a friend of the gods, the prophet can often foretell the future.

The seers and prophets of later times may be grouped under four headings. (1) The seers who accompanied the Greek army to interpret signs and conduct the sacrifices have already been mentioned. Their presence was important, not because the signs were so difficult to discern, but rather because some official interpreter of the divine will lent greater sanction. At the same time, as Xenophon points out,[4] a prophet like Silanus may see more and see more clearly than the general. His superior powers rest partly on experience,[5] partly on divine enlightenment. To secure a noted seer like Teisamenus the Spartans made the one exception to their universal rule, granting the prize of Spartan citizenship to him and

[1] *Odyssey*, 1. 415.
[2] *Odyssey*, 17. 384; cp. 2. 158, 170.
[3] *Odyssey*, 2. 201; *Iliad*, 1. 106.
[4] *Anabasis*, 1. 7. 18.
[5] Isocrates (19. 5 6) speaks of the books of the seer Polemaenetus by means of which one Thrasyllus became proficient in the art.

to his brother.[1] In all probability such seers were attached to the early kings of Greece; certainly the position assigned in story to Teiresias[2] corresponds closely to that of the seers in the Greek army.

(2) The transition is easy from these attendants of the army to the great families of seers connected with such shrines as Olympia. Homer recognizes that the divine gift runs in families like that of Melampus, a seer family widely renowned in early legend.[3] The Clytiadae of Elis traced their descent from Melampus.[4] Even more influential in the historic period were the Iamidae, whose praises Pindar sang in the sixth *Olympian Ode*. It was the special right of this family to practise divination by means of the ashes of burnt offerings on the great altar of Zeus at Olympia.[5] Such was its influence that members of the family found occupation as seers in all parts of the Greek world. To the Iamidae belonged Teisamenus, the seer at the battle of Plataea, and Callias whom the people of Croton received and honored.[6] No doubt the lore of generations would be preserved in such a family, while their position at Olympia enabled them to claim powers due to close connection with Zeus.

(3) The seers and prophets already considered were entirely free from that kind of wild inspiration which nature peoples attribute to possession by a divine spirit. Yet the word for prophet (*μάντις* from *μαίνομαι, to rage*) is a relic of this belief; Greek thought makes full place for that inspiration which renders men *ἔνθεοι, θεοφόρητοι, possessed by a god*. "There is also a madness which is the special gift of heaven, and the source of the chiefest blessings among men. For prophecy is a madness . . . and in proportion as prophecy is higher and more perfect than divination . . . is madness superior to a sane mind, for the one is only of human, but the other of divine origin."[7] Plato cites as exam-

[1] Herodotus, 9. 33.

[2] Apparently the name is from the root which appears in *τέρας, sign*.

[3] *Odyssey*, 11. 291; 15. 225 f.

[4] Pausanias, 6. 17. 6.

[5] Pindar, *Olym*. 8. 2.

[6] Herodotus, 9. 33; 5. 44.

[7] Plato, *Phaedr*. 244, trans. Jowett. Cp. Aristotle, *Prob*. XXX.

ples the Pythia at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona; Cassandra is "frenzied, by some god's might swayed" when "the dread pang of true prophet's gift with preludes of great evil dizzies" her;[1] a seer like Amphilytus greeted Peisistratus, Herodotus says, with inspired hexameters.[2] Ventriloquism was sometimes used to delude the people into thinking they heard words inspired of a god.[3] But while Greek thought clearly recognized and explained such divine inspiration, it found small place in actual practice. The original Sibyl may have been a historical person who was subject to prophetic frenzy; the oracles of the Sibyl, of Musaeus, Bacis, or Glanis are known as collections referred to a more or less mythical past.

(4) In everyday life it was the "chresmologist," the man who possessed a collection of ancient oracles which he interpreted to meet the need of the questioner, who ordinarily played the rôle of the prophet for Greece. Such collections sometimes belonged to the state, as the "parchments of Loxias" at Argos, and the oracles brought from the Athenian acropolis to Sparta: often they were in private possession.[4] Not only these ancient oracles, but the responses of the Pythia, were interpreted by men who practised the trade of the chresmologist.[5] Samples of the kind of oracle such a man would produce from his own collection with the authority of Bacis or Musaeus, may be found in Herodotus.[6] Aristophanes[7] has no more bitter satire than for these men who successfully practised on the credulity of the people. That prophecy was a trade practised for the money rewards it would bring, and that oracles were constantly being forged to meet emergencies and inserted in the old collections, the Greeks distinctly recognized.[8] Even the seer who attended the army must

[1] Aeschylus, *Agam.* 1140, 1215, trans. Plumptre. [2] Herodotus, 1. 62.
[3] Plutarch, *De defect. orac.* 9, p. 414 E; cp. Philochorus, *Frag.* 192.
[4] Herodotus, 5. 90; Euripides, *Frag.* 629; Pausanias, 10. 12. 11; Herodotus, 7. 6.
[5] Herodotus, 7. 141 f. [6] Herodotus, 8. 20; 8. 96; 9. 43.
[7] Aristophanes, *Eq.* and *Av.* passim.
[8] Herodotus, 7. 6; Sophocles, *Ant.* 1036, 1055; Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 52.

be watched by the general. Such was the inevitable result when men sought from the gods not a revelation of the divine nature, but some knowledge by which they might secure prosperity for themselves or for their state. The wonder is that such prophets could continue to shelter themselves under the cloak of religion. The honor often accorded to them is inexplicable except on the assumption that some of them were shrewd men honestly trying to give wise advice.[1]

**9. Oracles.** — The most satisfactory means of ascertaining the future, for here men could actually ask questions of some mouthpiece of the gods, were the oracles, at Dodona and Ammon, at Branchidae and Colophon, at Lebadeia and Oropus, most important of all at Delphi. A Greek "oracle" was simply a centre of religious worship where some form of divination was systematized. The oracles of Trophonius[2] and Asclepius were dream oracles, shrines in which the sick slept seeking means of cure, or where men who desired other knowledge of the future obtained it through dreams. The oracles of Zeus were given through signs. At Olympia signs from sacrifices to the god, at Ammon signs from the movement of the image as carried by the priests, at Dodona signs from the rustling leaves of Zeus's oak, were interpreted by the official servants of the god.[3] Apollo was the god of inspiration; at more than one shrine of Apollo his servant was thought to be overcome by the spirit of the god till the answers which came through human lips were in reality from the divine spirit within. To determine the religious significance of oracles for Greece, it is sufficient to consider the most important of them, the shrine of Apollo Pythios at Delphi.

The story goes that sheep grazing on the rocky slopes of Parnassus were affected by gases and performed strange antics as they passed a certain spot; that the shepherds, then others following their example, found that when they breathed these gases

[1] Herodotus, 9. 33; Pausanias, 10. 9. 7.

[2] Pausanias, 9. 39. 5 f.

[3] Schol. on Pindar, *Olym.* 6. 119; Diodorus, 17. 50; *Odyssey*, 14. 327 (cp. Aeschylus, *Prom.* 832).

they could see into the future; that finally a temple of Apollo was built over the chasm, and the Pythian priestess, seated on a tripod, breathed the gases till the god inspired her to answer the questions of those who came to consult the oracle.[1] The priestess was a native of Delphi, a maiden or in late times an aged

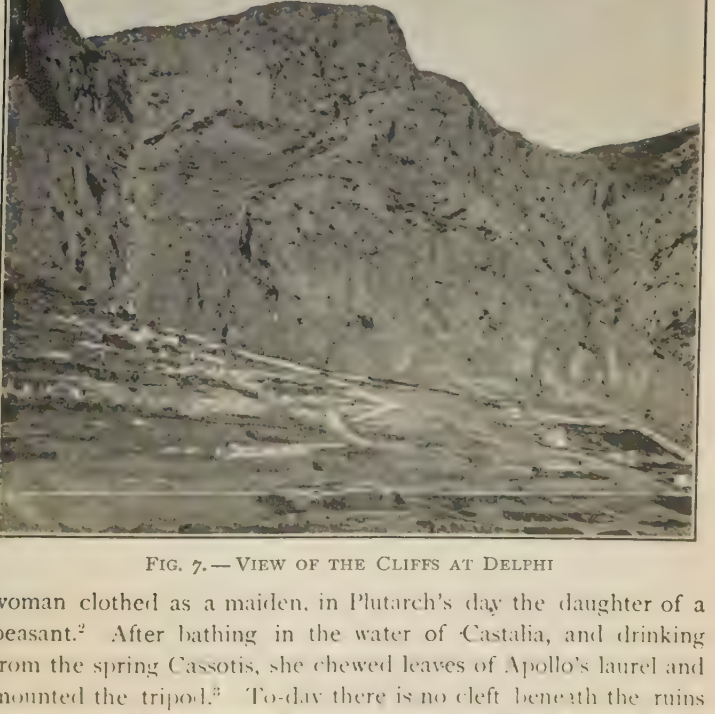

FIG. 7. — VIEW OF THE CLIFFS AT DELPHI

woman clothed as a maiden, in Plutarch's day the daughter of a peasant.[2] After bathing in the water of Castalia, and drinking from the spring Cassotis, she chewed leaves of Apollo's laurel and mounted the tripod.[3] To-day there is no cleft beneath the ruins of the temple; a recent German student of Delphi[4] has noted

[1] Diodorus, 16. 26; Aristotle, *De mundo*, 4; Pausanias, 10. 5. 6-7; Plutarch, *De defect. orac.* 46, p. 435 D; Strabo, 8. 419.

[2] Euripides, *Ion*, 1322; Diodorus, 16. 29; Plutarch, *De Pyth. orac.* 22, p. 405 C.

[3] Lucian, *Hermot.* 60, p. 801; *Bis acc.* 1, p. 792.

[4] Pomtow, *Beiträge zur Topographie von Delphi* (1889), 32 Anm. 2.

currents of ice-cold air with a sharp acid smell issuing from the earth in the vicinity. Gas or no gas, the ritual would be sufficient to produce hypnotic effects in a susceptible priestess. Unwillingly, "struggling against Apollo's power," she mounted the tripod. Meantime the questioners had sacrificed to Apollo, lots had determined their order, and the questions in written form were handed to the head official (προφήτης).[1] Within the shrine the official propounded the question to the raving priestess, her answer, only partly intelligible, he put into a sort of hexameter verse, and returned it in writing, sealed, to the questioner.[2] All the imposing ritual of a wealthy shrine was devised to gain credence for this answer.

More than two hundred supposed deliverances of the oracle are preserved to us in literature. Most of these are given by late authors and their validity is very doubtful. Some fifty of them, however, are quoted in Herodotus; and of these it may be affirmed that he obtained at least half at Delphi itself. Whether they are genuine or forged by Delphic priests in the form of genuine oracles, they illustrate the claims of the shrine.[3] Naturally the historian quotes very few that deal with private life. We do read how Croesus enquired about his dead son, Halyattes about his illness, Teisamenus as to offspring.[4] Oftentimes the answer gave some other information than what was asked, information that in the case of Teisamenus led to its own fulfilment. A long series of the oracles quoted by Herodotus deal with the internal needs of states: where cure from pestilence is sought, some moral or religious cause is assigned in answer and some moral or religious cure suggested; for political confusion, an arbitrator is assigned, or a code of laws sanctioned, or a king confirmed in his position;[5] changes in worship, also, are rejected or

[1] Plutarch, *Quaes. graec.* 9, p. 292 D; *De defect. orac.* 49, p. 437 A; Schol. on Aristophanes, *Plut.* 39.

[2] Plutarch, *De Pyth. orac.* 5, p. 396 D; Suidas, *s.v.* τὰ τρία.

[3] "Herodotus and the Oracle at Delphi," *Classical Journal*, 1 (1906) 37 f.

[4] Herodotus, 1. 85; 1. 19; 9. 33.

[5] Herodotus, 4. 151 f.; 5. 82; 4. 161; 1. 65; 6. 52; 1. 13; 4. 163; 5. 67; 7. 178; Demosthenes, 21. 52 f.

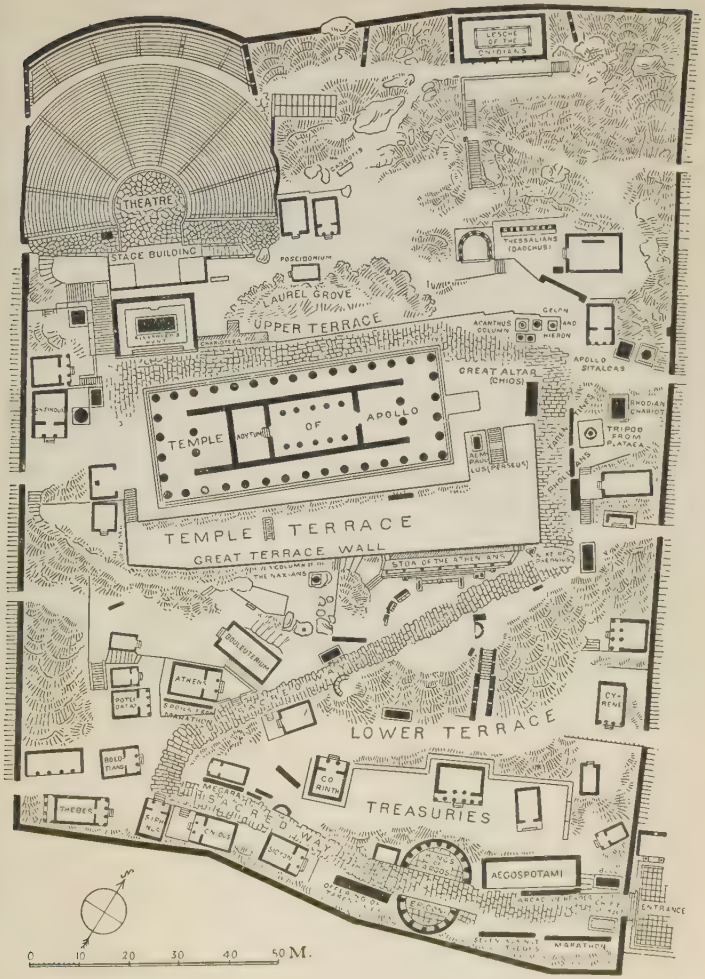


FIG. 8.—PLAN OF THE PRECINCT OF APOLLO AT DELPHI

approved by the Delphic god. Other oracles deal with external politics. The shrine claimed the right to suggest colonies, to determine their destination, and to establish the form of government.[1] In case of war, the answers of the oracle now predicted failure, now suggested an alliance, at times they urged moderation

FIG. 9. — VIEW OF THE RUINS OF THE SHRINE OF APOLLO AT DELPHI

in victory, or warned of treachery, or finally they promised success.[2] Necessarily very many of the answers were vague, in most general terms, perhaps susceptible of opposite meanings. When Croesus inquired whether he should march against the Persians, he was told that if he crossed the river Halys he should destroy a great kingdom — his own kingdom, as the event proved.[3] The fact remains that they often contained very shrewd advice; for this reason and because the answers were often such as to cause

[1] Herodotus, 5. 42; 4. 150. [2] Herodotus, 6. 19; 7. 140; 5. 79; 4. 163.
[3] Herodotus, 1. 53; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3. 5.

their own fulfilment, the claims of the oracle to foretell the future found considerable justification.

In particular the answers of the oracle stood for progress in ethics and in religion. Glaucus, who asked whether he could break an oath,[1] so the priests said, was told that for even proposing the question his family should utterly perish. A late story tells of three men attacked by robbers; the one who ran away was condemned by the oracle for refusing his aid; the second, who killed his companion in trying to aid him, was told that his hands were made even purer by manslaughter with pure intention.[2] Extreme cruelty was assigned as the cause of divine wrath which led to pestilence.[3] As the penalty for murder the oracle advised some money recompense instead of more shedding of blood.[4] In religion the influence of the oracle was directed toward the development of local worship; not that it in any way sought to check the worship of the Olympian deities, but its policy was to establish that local worship of heroes in which there was a more vital religion for the people than in the splendid state cults.

What estimate are we to place on oracles which consist of the incoherent cries of a delirious woman interpreted by shrewd priests? In antiquity the shrine had such a reputation that not only Greece, but Asia Minor, and the Roman world came here to consult the god. The early fathers of the Christian church consistently held that the inspiration of the Pythia was real, the work of evil spirits. One of the first to attack this doctrine was the Hollander, Van Dale,[5] who explained the oracles as the result of conscious deception deliberately practised by the priests. His theory leaves unexplained the influence of the oracle for purer morals; nor can we believe that freedom-loving Greeks would have yielded submission for centuries to the dictates of such deliberate imposition. Both the Pythian priestess, the "prophet,"

[1] Herodotus, 6. 86.
[2] Aelian, *Var. hist.* 3. 44.
[3] Herodotus, 6. 139.
[4] Herodotus, 8. 114.
[5] *De oraculis veterum ethnicorum dissertationes duae*, Amsterdam, 1700.

and the priests must have been well informed as to the political condition of the Greek states; if one may judge from the oracles that remain, they were inspired by high ideals and a real desire for the welfare of Greece; the oracles further reveal certain definite principles, *e.g.* as to colonies, the worship of heroes, recompense for murder, principles that applied to large numbers of the questions asked. When the shrine "medized" or "philippized," the latter a word of Demosthenes,[1] it was because the Greek people were overmastered by fear of Xerxes and of Philip; actual corruption of the oracle, wholly improbable in these cases, was proven only in a very few instances which were promptly punished by the Delphians themselves.[2] So far as the delirious priestess is concerned, she was no doubt open to unconscious suggestion from the official "prophet" who put the question to her; in giving metrical form to her answers we can hardly doubt that, however much he was really responsible for the content of the reply, he ordinarily acted in the honest conviction that he was giving what Apollo had suggested through the priestess.

The fact remains unquestioned that Delphi was, as it has often been called, the "Vatican of antiquity," a holy city, a centre of moral teaching, and an authoritative guide in matters of politics as well as in matters of religion.

[1] Aeschines, 3. 130.
[2] Herodotus, 6. 66; Plutarch, *Lysander*, 25, p. 447.

# CHAPTER II

## THE WORSHIP OF THE GODS

**1. Sacred Places.** — While the gods of Homer have in Olympus their dwellings made by Hephaestus, each god has also favorite haunts on the earth where he is wont to receive the worship of men. In later ages also men worshipped in places which suggested the presence of the gods, and where men worshipped was the place at which a god liked to be present. Mountain tops high in heaven and often covered with thunder clouds suggested the presence of Zeus, grottoes and springs the presence of nymphs, underground caverns, gods or spirits from the world below; in any thick grove might dwell a god. The goddess of the hearth dwelt inside the home, gods of the market-place in the busy centre of trade, so that it was a purely empirical deduction when Xenophon[1] stated that ordinarily a sanctuary should be located "in some conspicuous place, apart from the daily life of men"; such a principle, in so far as it was based on fact, would mean that the gods more commonly gave token of their presence in places apart from the daily life of men. For where the gods were manifestly present, worship would, of course, most surely reach them. The assumption that a god may be found again where he has once been present, is perhaps the most important principle in determining a place of worship.

Centres of local worship, sacred places where the gods come to enjoy the gifts men bring to them, are recognized in the Homeric poems. On his way to Troy Agamemnon stopped at every altar

[1] Xenophon, *Mem.* 3. 8. 10.

of Zeus to offer sacrifices.[1] Two shrines of the nymphs near Ithaca are described, wild spots where wayfarers stopped to honor the spirits of fertility.[2] Chryses, Maron, and Onetor were priests attached to shrines of Apollo or Zeus, whose duty it was to keep up the worship at these sacred spots.[3] Such a shrine included an altar and ordinarily a grove sacred to the god; its position might be determined by the nature of the god worshipped, as in the case of the shrine of Zeus on Mt. Ida, and that of the river god, Spercheius; in any case it was a favorite resort of the god.[4] When it was inside a city, or contained treasures of the god, a stone wall protected it from intrusion. In the palace also, the camp of an army, the hut of a swineherd, were altars on which parts of each animal killed for food were sacrificed to the gods.[5] In almost every instance it is clear that worship was carried on, not inside any building, but in the open air. The temples (or temple) which Chryses built must have been very simple, perhaps mere booths used in worship; the temples of the Phaeacians, and the temple vowed to Helios by the companions of Odysseus were more substantial; however, it was only the temples of Athena and of Apollo on the Trojan acropolis that played any part in the poems.[6] In the earlier period of the epic worship was described as taking place beside an altar in the open air; but when the poems took final shape, at least in the more important city shrines of Ionia, substantial houses for the god had taken the place of the simple altar near a grove.

In later times the sacred precinct (τέμενος) might be a very limited space about the temple, or in the country it might cover several miles. Sometimes it was holy ground that none could enter, like

[1] *Iliad*, 8. 238; cp. "Local Cults in Homer," *The New World*, December, 1895.
[2] *Odyssey*, 13. 349; 17. 210.
[3] *Iliad*, 1. 11, 39; 16. 604; *Odyssey*, 9. 197.
[4] *Iliad*, 2. 305, 506; *Odyssey*, 6. 162, 291, 321; *Iliad*, 22. 170; 23. 148.
[5] *Iliad*, 11. 773; 2. 400 f.; *Odyssey*, 14. 420.
[6] *Iliad*, 1. 39; *Odyssey*, 6. 10; 12. 346; *Iliad*, 6. 88, 274, 279, 297; 5. 446–448; 7. 83; cp. Cauer, *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*, 197 f.

"the holy grove,
By foot of man untrod,
Where dwell the Virgin Ones invincible;"[1]

again it could be entered only at certain periods by persons duly purified,[2] or there might be ownership by the god without any such restrictions. The whole Crisaean plain was dedicated to the Delphic gods to lie fallow.[3] Ordinarily, however, such properties served as a source of income to the shrine of the god; contracts still extant tell of the exact manner in which the land was to be used, the amount to be paid to the god, and the care with which he was protected against loss.[4] Such properties were often given to Greek shrines, as later to Christian churches, to be a source of income. Along with the lands, the gods owned and leased now houses, now factories, flocks of sheep, poultry, or rights in fisheries.[5] Rentals from these sources, a share in taxes, some perquisites from the animals sacrificed, and fines imposed for failure to obey divine commands, constituted the income of the shrine. The management of the income was in the hands of the priests,[6] though ordinarily the priests were state officials.

In the city of Athens we know of more than two hundred such shrines (including altars to one god in the precinct of another god) which were centres of worship. Speaking generally we may say that in no two of these shrines was the same god worshipped under the same aspect of his being.[7] Athena was worshipped on

[1] Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 125 f., trans. Plumptre.

[2] *E.g.* the shrine of Hippodameia at Olympia was entered once a year by women. Pausanias, 6. 20. 4.

[3] Aeschines, 3. 107–108; cp. Plutarch, *Pericles*, 30, p. 168.

[4] *E.g.* for the shrine of Codrus, Neleus, and Basile, *C.I.A.* IV. 1. 2, p. 66, no. 53 a; cp. also *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 4 (1880) 295 f.; 16 (1892) 278 f., and farther references given by Stengel, *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer*, 19–21.

[5] *C.I.A.* I. 283; II. 817; *Altertümer von Pergamon*, 8. 1, p. 36, no. 40; *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 6 (1882) 20, l. 158 f.; 14 (1890) 399 f.

[6] In the case of important shrines a special state commission (at Athens the ταμίαι τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων) was often appointed to take charge of the temple finances.

[7] Cp. Introduction, p. 22.

the Acropolis as Athena Polias, guardian of the city, as Athena Nike, and as Athena Hygieia; on the Areopagus she was Athena Areia; elsewhere in the city were shrines of Athena Hephaistia, Athena Hippia, Athena Skiras, etc. These different shrines did not exist for the convenience of worshippers, like churches in a modern city, but the goddess was worshipped at each point in a different aspect of her nature. Oftentimes they represented some old worship at Athens; or they were branches of honored cults elsewhere, like the worship of Apollo Pythios on the banks of the Ilissus, or that of Artemis Brauronia on the Acropolis, branches established that Athens might worship the god of Delphi and the goddess of Brauron; sometimes they seem to be offshoots of another Athenian cult, established to emphasize some one aspect

FIG. 10. — EARLY BLACK-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (British Museum)

A procession headed by a priestess with tray of offerings and a man playing the double flute is conducting a bull to the altar of Athena; behind the altar is a statue of Athena and a serpent.

of the god. An examination of these cults confirms the impression that worship was carried on primarily in the name of the city, so that one shrine to one aspect of a god was all sufficient; and further that each god or goddess was at the same time one and many-fold, one in mythological theory, many-fold in worship.

The centre of worship, ordinarily within a sacred precinct, was the altar (*βωμός*). The attempt has been made to prove that Greek altars were in the first instance seats for the unseen god, present with his worshippers; then later, tables to receive the offering or hearths where it could be burnt.[1] No other explanation has been offered for the peculiar shapes of altars depicted in early vase paintings, than that the higher part represents a seat, the lower part a footstool where men might humbly lay their gifts. The material of which the altar was made and its form, were

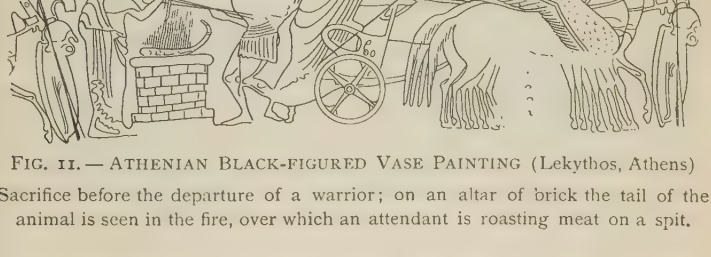

FIG. 11. — ATHENIAN BLACK-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Lekythos, Athens)
Sacrifice before the departure of a warrior; on an altar of brick the tail of the animal is seen in the fire, over which an attendant is roasting meat on a spit.

determined partly by its position and use, partly by local tradition. In the house a table or a pillar, or even some portable tray, received the fruits and flowers men offered to the god.[2] A heap of stones or sod might serve the traveller as an altar.[3] Before the temple there was built perhaps a large structure of cut stone,[4] or an altar was hewn from the natural rock; the ashes of former sacrifices, the piled up horns of previous victims, a mound of earth or stones even a few inches high, were the altars prescribed by holy tradition at some shrines;[5] again at Syracuse there are

[1] Reichel, *Ueber vorhellenische Götterkulte.*

[2] In general see de Molin, *De ara apud Graecos*, 1884, and the article "Altar" by Reisch in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopaedie.*

[3] Apollonius Rhodius, 1. 403; 2. 695.

[4] *E.g.* the altar of the Chians at Delphi, Herodotus 2. 135.

[5] Pausanias, 5. 13. 8; 9. 11. 7; Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo*, 60; *Altertümer von Pergamon*, 8. 1, no. 68.

still seen the remains of a rock altar a stadium in length,[1] and sculptured slabs testify to the magnificence of the great altar of Zeus at Pergamon. Oftentimes the "hearth" where the victims were burned was a distinct part of the altar.[2]

The most important question for the history of religion is concerned with the difference between the altar proper for the gods above and the hearth altar (ἐσχάρα) for the gods and spirits of the

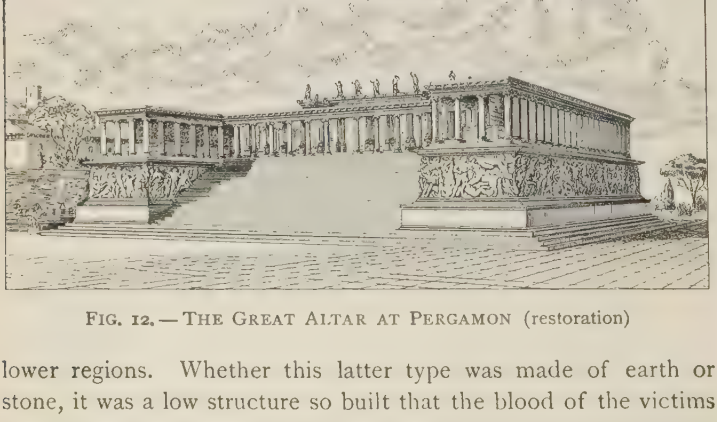

FIG. 12. — THE GREAT ALTAR AT PERGAMON (restoration)

lower regions. Whether this latter type was made of earth or stone, it was a low structure so built that the blood of the victims might run down through it into the earth itself. At the shrine in Samothrace and at the Kabeirion near Thebes,[3] this hearth included a covered stone bowl with such an aperture for the blood to percolate into the earth below. Fire carried the odor of fat thigh pieces to the gods above: the gods below drank the blood of victims slain to propitiate their wrath.

Almost without exception the Greek temple was a home for the god, not a place where men assembled for worship. In such a home some symbol or image denoted the god's presence; valuable gifts — wreaths or vessels of precious metal, works of art,

[1] Diodorus, 16. 83. [2] Aristophanes, *Ach.* 887; *Vesp.* 938.
[3] *Ath. Mitth.* 13 (1888) 95 and illustration.

or money — and the utensils of worship belonged there ;[1] at times it might even serve as the treasury for the city of which the god was the patron deity. Often the treasures belonging to the god were sufficiently large so that loans could be made to the state in time of need.[2] About the home of the god might be grouped the houses of his priests,[3] stalls for animals destined to be sacrificed, and occasionally dwellings where sick people could be brought to be healed by the god. All this precinct (*τέμενος*) was sacred. The man accused of a crime could flee here for safety, and, though there was a difference in the rights accorded to different temples, a suppliant of the god was not to be lightly treated. To remove an innocent person from the altar of the god where he had taken refuge was a sacrilege that stirred the divine anger. The right to shelter any man, innocent or guilty, was accorded only to a few shrines.[4] Bowls of holy water (*περιρραντήρια*) served to purify those who approached the god.[5]

The temple itself ordinarily faced the east, for the worship of the gods above belonged to the morning. Three steps ran around it, three, we are told, in order that the worshipper might place the right foot on the first and third.[6] The essential part of the temple was the chamber in which stood the symbol or image of the god (*cella*, *ναός* ; the word *ἄδυτον* is properly applied to an inner room, but sometimes it is used for the cella). The simpler form of temple consisted of a cella with columns at the front, or at both front and back ; in the case of larger buildings one or even two rows of columns ran around the entire building, but the building proper still retained the extra columns at the end, inside the outer

[1] Cp. the inventory of the objects in the temple of Apollo at Delos about 180 B.C., *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 6 (1882) 29 f. ; Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 588.

[2] Cp. the proposal of the Corinthians to borrow from the temple funds at Delphi and Olympia, Thucydides, 1. 121 ; the temples also received deposits of money, like a modern bank, cp. Posidonius in Athenaeus, 6. 24, p. 233 F ; cp. Pausanias 10. 14. 7.

[3] Strabo 12, p. 575 ; Euripides, *Iph. Taur.* 65.

[4] *E.g.* the shrine of Athena Alea in Tegea (Xenophon, *Hell.* 3. 5. 25 ; Pausanius, 3. 5. 6), and of Zeus Lykaios at Megalopolis (Thucydides, 5. 16).

[5] Herodotus, 1. 51 ; Pollux, 1. 8. [6] Vitruvius, 3. 4. 4.

row. The Parthenon at Athens is a typical Greek temple of this second type. It had eight columns at each end, and seventeen on each side; behind the eight columns were six more columns in front of the building itself. The base on which the columns rested was 69.51 metres in length and 30.86 metres wide. In the case of the Parthenon a sculptured frieze ran around the upper wall of the building, inside the outer row of columns; the colonnade had a richly decorated ceiling; over the architrave proper

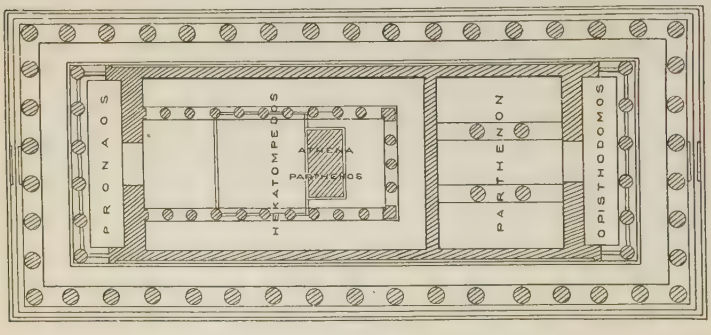


FIG. 13. — GROUND PLAN OF THE PARTHENON

on the outside sculptured slabs (metopes) were set between supporting blocks (triglyphs); and in the pediments or gable ends were placed groups of figures. The frieze represented the great annual procession at the Panathenaic festival; it began at the west of the building with young men preparing to join the procession; on the sides of the temple were to be seen the youth on horseback, men in armor in chariots, animals brought to the sacrifice, and persons carrying the necessary utensils; while at the front officials of the goddess received the procession in the presence of the gods of Attica. The metopes represented the contest of the gods and giants, and other contests in which law and order triumphed over barbarian force. In the east pediment was to be seen the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus, in the

west pediment the contest of Athena with Poseidon for the land of Attica. The building itself consisted of two parts, a long room

FIG. 14. — SECTION OF THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON

Cattle are being driven to the Acropolis in the Panathenaic procession, to be sacrificed to Athena.

facing the east in which stood the great gold and ivory image of the goddess with its altar table, and a square room behind (the Παρθενών proper) where were kept utensils, votive offerings, and other property of the goddess.

FIG. 15. — COIN OF MEGALOPOLIS (Caracalla)

A herm-figure of Heracles, draped.

In early times there was no cult image, properly so called, although perhaps some sacred stone or pillar marked the spot where the god was present for his worshippers. Whether the Homeric poems mention real cult images, is a matter of dispute.[1] Figures of the god in clay or wood seem to have been presented as votive offerings, and it is not improbable that in many cases one of these offerings became the cult image (ἄγαλμα) of the god. Hestia, goddess of the fire on the hearth, never was represented by any images, for she was herself present in the fire. The earlier cult images were rude objects of wood (ξόανα) with but little resemblance to the human form; we know something of them,

[1] See *Iliad*, 6. 92, 303.

for in many temples they were never replaced, or were preserved as relics.[1] By far the commonest form of earlier cult image to persist was the *herm* (ἑρμῆς) or *term;* the god Hermes continued to be represented by a square pillar with a head or a mask at the top, and occasionally other gods, especially Dionysus, were represented by similar "herms." To cleanse the image, perhaps to decorate it with fresh garments, was often an important part of the annual worship at the temple.[2] With the great development of plastic art in the fifth and fourth centuries almost every temple received a new image in which the nature of the god found adequate artistic expression. These images were of bronze, of marble, of gold and ivory with a wooden core.[3] So the Athena which stood in the Parthenon was a framework covered with delicately tinted plates of ivory for the flesh parts, while the garments and accessories were made from plates of gold. As the morning light streamed in through the great door this image seemed truly to embody the goddess of war and wisdom whose nature so fitly expressed the spirit of the Athenian people. To such an image our word "idol" hardly applies. It did indeed represent the goddess herself present in her home, but she was in no wise limited to its gold and its ivory; not the image, but the goddess, received the homage of the Athenians.

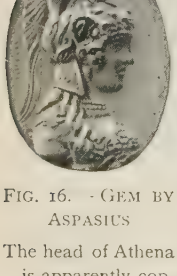

FIG. 16. - GEM BY ASPASIUS

The head of Athena is apparently copied from the statue in the Parthenon.

**2. Sacred Times.** — Just as some places are sacred because the presence of the god has been felt there and he may be expected to visit the spot again, so some times are sacred; *i.e.* on these days the god has visited his temple, and on these days he may be expected to be present with his worshippers once more.[4] On this

[1] The meaning of the term *xoanon* in Pausanias is discussed by Fraser, *Pausanias* 2. 69.

[2] Pausanias, 3. 16. 2; 6. 25. 5; Euripides, *Iph. Taur.* 1199.

[3] Cp. Lucian, *Gallus*, 24; Valerius Maximus 1. Ext. 7.

[4] Aristophanes, *Nub.* 615 f.; cp. *Odyssey*, 3. 44.

basis the calendar becomes a religious institution, for days and years are reckoned by the recurring worship of the gods. Perhaps for the reason that these occasions of worship differed in different localities, they find small mention in the Homeric poems. The feast of Apollo at Ithaca, which is in progress at the time of the trials of Odysseus's bow, is an indication, if any proof be needed, that the practice of observing set days as religious festivals dates back to early times.[1] In general, however, sacrifices are described as taking place when men are passing some sacred spot, or in connection with the main meal of the day, or in times of special need;[2] as the gods are divested of local features in the epic, so local occasions of worship are neglected in favor of occasions universally recognized.

In the periods of which we have fuller information, it becomes clear that the Greeks laid much stress on sacred times. There are no traces of anything like the Jewish Sabbath or the Christian Sunday; in its stead each state had a series of religious festivals which occurred at irregular intervals through the year. Many of these caused little or no interference to regular business; many, on the other hand, were of sufficient importance to involve a suspension of public and private business in favor of the festival. The Athenians set aside more than fifty days each year specifically for public worship of the gods, and only one day in the year, it is said, was without its appointed offering to some god.[3] Certain days in each month were sacred to a god, the first and seventh to Apollo, the fourth to Hermes and to Aphrodite, the sixth to Artemis, the third, thirteenth, fifteenth, and twenty-eighth to Athena.[4] Each shrine had a monthly or an annual festival varying in importance with the character of the shrine: it might be some simple offering shared only by a few people of the neighborhood; it might be the Panathenaea or the Eleusinia, national feasts that lasted for days, splendid with processions and sacrifices,

[1] *Iliad*, 9. 534; *Odyssey*, 20. 156, 276 f.

[2] *Iliad*, 8. 238; 2. 402 f.; *Odyssey*, 14. 421; 9. 551; *Iliad*, 7. 177.

[3] Thucydides, 2. 38 and schol.

[4] Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 456.

solemn with mysterious ritual (ἑορταί, πανηγύρεις).[1] The different elements that entered into this worship will be considered in the following sections. Finally biennial and quadrennial festivals were celebrated with special pomp at Delphi, Olympia, and other great religious centres. Oftentimes it is possible to ascertain the reason why a festival was celebrated at a given time, or at least the reason assigned by the worshippers for its celebration at that time.[2] Agricultural festivals, including those celebrated to Zeus the heaven-god, Demeter, goddess of the grain, Dionysus, god of the vine, Apollo, protector of the growing crops, etc., were determined by the season of the year. Asclepius was worshipped on the anniversary of the establishment of his cult in Athens; in other instances also the mythical anniversary of the coming of the god was the cause assigned for the festival. The birth of Artemis and of Apollo was celebrated on the sixth and seventh of each month; and the twenty-eighth of the month was recognized in worship as the birthday of Athena. At Delphi the return of Apollo in the spring and that of Dionysus in the autumn were the occasion of special religious rites. In all these instances the principles hold good that the gods are likely to appear again at the date when they have appeared at their shrines before, and that worship should be offered to them when their presence is expected.

**3. Sacred Persons; Priests and Attendants.** — Although priests are mentioned several times in the Homeric poems, all the sacrifices of which an account is given are performed by the head of a household or by a king. The priest (ἱερεύς, ἀρητήρ) is the person who presides over some local shrine, directing the worship and making such sacrifices as its ritual demands. Such a priest, at least in Troy, was appointed by the people; Theano, priestess of Athena, and Onetor, priest of Idaean Zeus, were married; Hypsenor, priest of the Scamander, was not prevented by his sacred office from taking part in the defence of the city; Maron, priest

[1] In Appendix II is given a list of the more important festivals of Athens; cp. also A. Mommsen, *Die Feste der Stadt Athen*, 1898.

[2] Cp. Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 459 f.

of Apollo at Ismarus, dwelt with wife and child in the sacred grove of Apollo.[1] In virtue of his office the priest was greatly honored by the people, "honored as a god" the poet says. For this reason the Aetolians sent priests to treat with a besieging enemy;

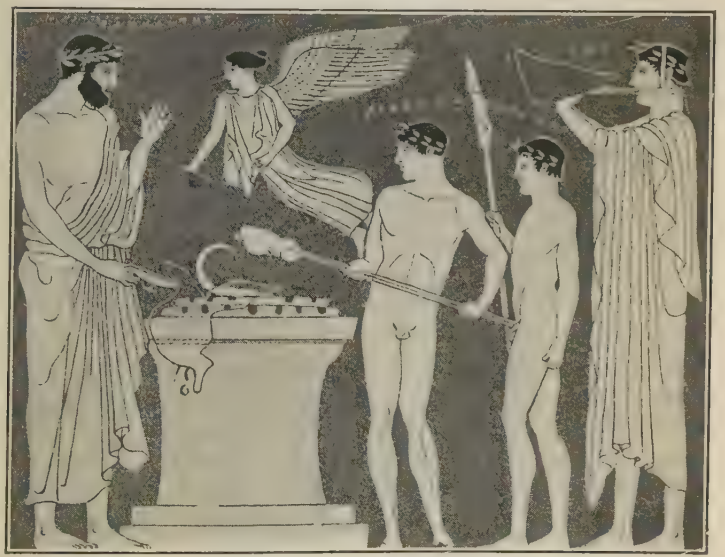

FIG. 17. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Stamnos, British Museum)
The priest raises his left hand in attitude of worship before the altar, above which Nike flies to fill the vessel in his right hand; opposite him are youths with spits and a flute player.

Odysseus protected Maron when Ismarus was taken; Chryses, trusting in the respect due to his position, entered the camp of the enemy to demand of the Greeks his captured daughter.[2] It appears from these instances that while the priest was not cut off from the activities of ordinary life, his connection with the god brought him such privileges and immunities as might be granted to the special servant of any powerful ruler.

1 *Iliad*, 5. 76 f.; 6. 298 f.; 16. 604; *Odyssey*, 9. 197 f.
2 *Iliad*, 9. 575; 1. 11 f.; *Odyssey*, 9. 199.

The conception of the priest as the person in charge of some one shrine held good in later periods. In Greece the priest was not a "holy man"; even if one does not accept literally the statement of Isocrates[1] that any one is good enough to become a priest, the office was not one that required any unusual qualification in morals or piety. Nor was it necessary for the priest to have any special education; such esoteric knowledge as was needed for his duties he could easily acquire after taking office. Inasmuch as there was no organic connection between the priests of different shrines, and there were no priests except those connected with particular shrines, the Greek cities were free from all the dangers of priestcraft. At the same time religion must remain entirely unorganized, except as it came under the direction of the state.

The choice of a priest must conform to conditions which differed with each shrine. Ordinarily the gods were served by men and the goddesses by women; but the opposite was not rare, as at Tegea where a boy was priest of Athena, and at Thespiae where the priestess of Heracles was a young woman.[2] In some places young boys and girls were demanded by the ritual as priests;[3] in some, old men or women; more commonly the priest was a person in the prime of life. Physical perfection, even physical beauty, was necessary to please the god; an "unlucky" man would not be chosen, for ill luck was in some way connected with divine anger; again, as acting for the state, the priest must be of citizen parents.[4] Ordinarily the requirements of a priesthood were few and simple; any one who conformed to these conditions might be appointed to the office.

The term of office for a priest in some instances lasted as long as he met the conditions as to age or purity, or during his lifetime; not infrequently it lasted only a year. The method of filling the

[1] Isocrates, 2. 6, p. 16.

[2] Pausanias, 8. 47. 3; 9. 27. 6.

[3] *E.g.* Pausanias, 2. 33. 2; 10. 34. 8.

[4] Plato, *Leg.* 6, p. 759 C; Antiphanes, quoted by Athenaeus, 7. 55, p. 300 A; Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 594.

office varied with the requirements of each shrine. When the worship was confined to a particular family in its origin, or where one family had performed some special service for the honor of the god, such as giving the money to build the temple, the priesthood was often limited to that family.[1] At Eleusis, for instance, the hierophant was always one of the Eumolpidae ; the other main officials belonged to the family of the Kerykes.[2] In these cases the successor to a priest might be selected within the family by some fixed principle (*e.g.* the oldest son of the former priest), or by lot, or by the testament of his predecessor. Where no such limitation existed, the king or in a democracy the people appointed many of the priests.[3] Occasionally the right to a priesthood was sold to the highest bidder, in which case only those could buy the right who conformed to all the requirements of the office.[4] At Athens probably the commonest method of appointment was to cast lots among approved candidates.[5] These methods of appointment are further evidence that the priesthood was a sacred office only in a very limited sense of the term. The requirements made in behalf of the god were few and simple ; they concerned mainly the physical character of the candidate ; when these were satisfied, the ritual might be performed so as to secure the god's favor. Naturally no elaborate consecration was necessary when the demands of the god were so simple.

The emoluments of the priest's office consisted of money and of other privileges which had a money value, such as a portion from every sacrifice, in addition to some public honors. The prices paid for the priesthoods in the city of Erythrae varied from 10 to 4610 drachmas, prices that probably represent the annual net value of the office *plus* what the buyer was ready to pay for the honor that went with it.[6] The priestess of Athena Nike received in money 50 drachmas a year ; part of the money gifts to

[1] *E.g.* the priesthood of Zeus Karios, Herodotus, 5. 66; and the descendants of Telines at Gela, *ibid.* 7. 153.

[2] Dittenberger in *Hermes*, 20 (1885) 1 f. [3] Cp. Dionysius Halicarn. 2. 21.

[4] Inscription from Erythrae, Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 600.

[5] Plato, *Leg.* 6, 759 C; *C.I.A.* II. 567 b, 622. [6] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 600.

Athena Polias fell to the share of her priestess; at some shrines a gift to the priest in money went with each sacrifice.[1] In connection with the administration of the temple property the priest might receive a percentage of the net gain.[2] Oftentimes he had the right to a dwelling on the temple ground, and was abundantly provided with food by his share in the sacrifices.[3] He might also have the use of temple land for grazing purposes or farming, and a personal share in other rights belonging to the temple. Many priests were freed from military services and all taxes, though this right was sometimes more than counterbalanced by the demand that the priest himself contribute toward supporting a magnificent worship. The honor shown to a priest varied with the importance of his shrine. At Athens very many of the priests received front seats at the theatre and at public functions; in some cities the years were named from the persons holding an important priesthood; at the successful termination of his office a priest might be rewarded by the people with a gold crown or even with a statue.[4] That a man should undertake the office of priest from a purely unselfish motive, a desire either to please the god or to serve the people, was a conception that found no place in Greek religion. Nor is the reason far to seek; almost all worship is for the benefit

FIG. 18. — MARBLE SEAT FOR THE PRIEST OF DIONYSUS IN THE THEATRE AT ATHENS

[1] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 911. [2] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 604.

[3] Strabo, 12, p. 575; Schol. on Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 695, and *Plut.* 1105; von Prott, *Fasti Graeci*, n. 6.

[4] *C.I.A.* III. 261 f.; Thucydides, 2. 2; *C.I.A.* II. 477 b.

of the state, tribe, or family; the priest who acts as their agent earns his pay from them, and ordinarily he does not gain any enduring personal relation with the god whose worship he supervises.

During his duties as priest, a man often received a special title, *Purphoros* at Epidauros, *Stephanephoros* at Magnesia and elsewhere, *Loutrophoros* at Sicyon. The *Hierophant* at Eleusis is said to have laid aside his personal name while holding the office. Commonly the priest, at least while officiating, wore an unusual garment, an ungirded robe (chiton) of white or purple, or white with purple border.[1] The staff of the priest, the key of the priestess, sometimes a torch, the crown or the fillet of the god on their heads, were part of the insignia of office. Still it should be remembered that neither the office nor its insignia as a rule kept the priest from the business of ordinary life.

The requirements for the priests in the matter of ceremonial purity are not fully known. Every worshipper, like Hector in the *Iliad*,[2] must avoid approaching the god with soiled hands or unclean garment; for the priest this requirement was no doubt rigidly enforced. Many priests might be married; others must remain celibates, at least during their term of office. In some instances particular foods were unclean; cheese was forbidden the priestess of Athena Polias, fish the priestess of Hera at Argos, beans and goat flesh must be abjured by both priest and worshipper at a shrine of Lindos on the island of Rhodes.[3] Such requirements, so far as we know, were isolated and unusual, the remains of some ancient "taboo" at these shrines.

Though so little stress was laid on the sacredness of the priest, it was always thought that he had a connection with the god more intimate than that of other worshippers. When they came to sacrifice at the shrine, bringing their petition or paying a vow, they were obliged to engage the services of the priest in order to make

[1] Strabo, 14, p. 648; Athenaeus, 5, pp. 211 B, 215 B. [2] *Iliad*, 6. 266.
[3] Strabo, 9, p. 395; Aelian, *De nat. anim.* 9. 65; *C.I.G. Ins.* I. 789; cp. Plutarch, *Symp.* 8. 8. 4, p. 730 D.

sure that their sacrifice was offered in due form to gratify the god. For the regular worship of the shrine, the hymns, prayers, and sacrifices demanded by its ritual, the priest was alone responsible.[1] He directed it personally; and if the god gave evidence of his favor to the people, the priest was the one to be honored. Moreover it was the priest who preserved the shrine from impurity, guarded its votive offerings from theft, managed (with the "treasurers," ταμίαι) whatever properties it possessed.[2] When fugitives sought asylum there, it was his duty to receive them and protect them as best he could; when masters brought slaves to be freed, it was he who published their freedom by dedicating them to the god, or buying them for the god.[3] The priest took up questions of impiety and brought the guilty man before the courts in the name of the god. As a matter of fact he did represent the worshippers in the divine presence, and he might speak the will of the god to men, both blessing and cursing;[4] his office was distinctly sacred and holy, but it was the peculiarity of Greek religion to separate rather sharply the man from the office he held, with the result that the priest was sacred only at such times as he was acting in his official capacity.

So far as the other officials of the temple are concerned,[5] we may be satisfied to indicate the tasks which fell to them. In earlier times, and later at small shrines, one or two slaves belonging either to the shrine or to the priest could furnish him all the help he needed in carrying on the worship. Only the large shrines demanded a varied list of attendants. In this list would be included (1) heralds, and others who assisted in performing the sacrifices, *e.g.* the *hieropoioi;* (2) those whose duty it was under the supervision of the priests to take proper care of the

[1] Plato, *Leg.* 10, 909 D; Aristotle, *De repub.* 7 (6). 8. 18, p. 1322 b. Cp. *C.I.A.* II. 610.

[2] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 604.

[3] Foucart, *Mémoire sur l'affranchisement des esclaves*, Paris, 1886; Weil, *Ath. Mitth.* 4 (1879) 25 f.

[4] [Lysias] 6. 51, p. 107; cp. Plato, *Politicus*, 290 C, for the distinction of priest and seer (μάντις).

[5] Aristotle, *De repub.* 7 (6). 8. 18 f., p. 1322 b.

temple and its utensils, the sacred precinct, and the properties of the shrine (*νεωκόροι*) ; and (3) the officials who under the priest managed the finances of such shrines as had any considerable property (*ἱεροταμίαι, κωλακρέται*). To this list might be added musicians, and those who were appointed to perform some special function at one of the greater festivals (*e.g. ἀρρηφόροι* and *κανηφόροι* at the Panathenaea).[1]

In addition to the priests and attendants who were always attached to some one shrine, there were state officials of religion whose duties were more general.[2] The kings at Sparta and the *archon eponymos* at Athens had a general supervision of all cult matters ; in particular, cases of sacrilege were tried before them, on complaint of priest or citizen. When a new cult was to be established or some important change made in ritual, the senate and the people voted on the question ; either the priest or some special commission executed their decision.[3] A commission of hieropoioi at Athens (*ἱεροποιοὶ κατ' ἐνιαυτόν*) provided the victims for some of the greater sacrifices and had some supervision of the administration of all the temples ; other state commissions were appointed regularly (*e.g.* on temple repairs, *ἱερῶν ἐπισκευασταί*) with more specific functions.[4] Some of the state officials retained the duty of the earlier kings to sacrifice on behalf of the people. The prytanies offered sacrifices at the opening of an assembly, the polemarch sacrificed to Artemis and Enyalius, the generals (*στρατηγοί*) sacrificed for the army.[5] These religious duties of state officials were only secondary. In general the organization of religion crystallized about the individual shrines ; it was the duty of the state to give such supervision as was necessary to keep up in due form the ritual at these shrines.

**4. Forms of Worship** : (*a*) *Prayers, hymns, curses, oaths.* — In the Homeric poems a wish is often accompanied by an appeal

[1] *C.I.G.* 2715 ; Aristotle, *Athen. Pol.* 18 ; Pausanias, 1. 27. 3 ; *C.I.A.* III. 917–918.
[2] Aristotle, *Athen. Pol.* 30 ; Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 433 f.
[3] *Hermes*, 21 (1886) 91, l. 9 ; *C.I.A.* II. 477 b.
[4] Cp. Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 427 f. and references.
[5] *C.I.A.* II. 392, 408 ; Aristotle, *Athen. Pol.* 58 ; *C.I.A.* II. 302.

to the greater gods, "Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo," "May Athena grant me power in war," "Lord Zeus, may Telemachus be blessed among men and gain his heart's desire;"[1] such simple prayers constantly express the poet's conception of man's dependence on the gods. Prayer or a prayer-hymn regularly accompanies the sacrifice to express the attitude of the worshipper and the special purpose of the sacrifice. It may consist of a joyful paean, a chant of worship (ὀλολυγή), or a formal petition.[2] Prayer is appropriate also when some token may indicate the presence of the gods or when one passes a shrine. In dire need the heroes seek divine help, Chryses when his daughter is refused by Agamemnon, the Trojan women when Hector tells of the army's repulse, Odysseus worn out with swimming or fearing the outcome of the struggle with the suitors;[4] the heroes prayed in need, and in most instances help came. Nor should the regular worship at the principal meal of the day be forgotten, nor Odysseus's prayer before retiring at night.[5]

The choice of the god to whom prayer was made depended on what god was nearest; nearest in place, nearest in ties of personal relation, or nearest in his interest in the subject of the prayer.[6] It is part of the epic conception of Zeus that prayer was offered to him more frequently than to any other god.

The longer and more formal prayers[7] included (1) an invocation citing some titles of the god and perhaps mentioning the sphere of his activity; (2) an alleged ground for answering the prayer — former sacrifices to the god, former answers to prayer by the god, or an appeal to his pity; and (3) the petition proper. The reason why prayer should be answered was in almost every instance the bond which united the man and his god; it was not a bargain, *do ut des*, but a social relation, cemented, to be sure, by mutual gifts.

[1] *Iliad*, 4. 288; *Odyssey*, 7. 311; *Iliad*, 17. 561; *Odyssey*, 17. 354.
[2] *Iliad*, 1. 473; *Odyssey*, 4. 767.
[3] *Odyssey*, 20. 112; 13. 356.
[4] *Iliad*, 1. 37 f.; 6. 115, 240; 16. 514 f.; *Odyssey*, 5. 444 f.; 20. 98.
[5] *Odyssey*, 12. 337.
[6] *Odyssey*, 13. 356; 20. 100; *Iliad*, 16. 227 f.
[7] *E.g. Iliad*, 1. 39; 1. 451; 5. 115; 16. 233; 16. 514; *Odyssey*, 2. 262.

The religiousness of prayer in the epic lies in the frank, full recognition that "all men need the gods."[1] When Hector escaped him, Diomedes assumed that he must have prayed to Apollo before entering the battle; the man who prayed to the immortals did not come in last in the race or fail with the bow; the wall which the Greeks made without prayer could not prove a protection for them.[2] Any deeper or more personal feeling than would be exhibited toward a powerful and kindly human chief is not suggested. Even the striking passage on "Prayers of penitence . . . daughters of great Zeus . . . that have their task to go in the steps of sin . . . to heal the harm,"[3] out of line as it is with the main spirit of the poem, hardly suggests that prayer opens the way to any intimate spiritual relation with the gods.

It so happens that later literature does not contain many examples of prayers, though the Attic drama still shows epic influence in this particular.[4] Men pray to the gods, for from the gods come all good things. It was especially at the beginning of any new undertaking that the need of divine help was felt. At daybreak Helios was greeted with prayer; dinner began and ended with prayer; a prayer was offered when men entered the athletic games, or went on a hunt, that they might be successful; prayers were offered before exhibitions in the theatre, at the opening of the assembly, and especially when setting out for war; the farmer prayed when he began ploughing, and offered his first-fruits with thanks to the gods;[5] Demosthenes began his oration on the crown with a prayer that the judges might be guided to a just decision by

[1] *Odyssey*, 1. 48. [2] *Iliad*, 23. 546; 23. 863; 7. 448–463.

[3] *Iliad*, 9. 502 f.

[4] *E.g.* Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 627 f.; *Sept. Theb.* 146 f.; Aristophanes, *Equit.* 551 f.; *Nub* 563 f.; cp. Xenophon, *Oecon.* 6. 1.

[5] *Before a new undertaking*, Plato, *Tim.* 27 C; *Leg.* 712 B; *Daybreak*, Plato, *Symp.* 220 D; *Leg.* 887 E; *Meals*, Diotogenes in Stobaeus, *Flor.* 43. 130; Xenophon, *Hell.* 4. 7. 4; *Hunt*, Arrian, *Cyneget*, 34; Xenophon, *Cyneget*, 6. 13; *Theatre*, Demosthenes, 21. 51–52; *Assembly*, Aeschines, 1. 23; Thucydides, 8. 70; *War*, Thucydides, 2. 74; 6. 32; *Farming*, Hesiod, *Erga*, 336; Diodorus Sic., *Exc.* 23. 13.

the gods, and we are told that Pericles never spoke without a prayer that he might "utter no unfitting word."[1] In the orators the phrase "pray to the gods" means hardly more than "desire;"[2] such is the natural result when the Athenians prayed for whatever they desired with little thought of worship. On the other hand, Socrates simply prayed the gods to send good things, on the ground that they knew best what was good; for he thought that "those who prayed for gold or silver or power to rule or any such thing" were asking for what might turn out to be either good or bad.[3] A fable of Babrius[4] illustrates the folly of prayer for particular things: a farmer vows sacrifices to Hermes, Pan, and the Nymphs in case he finds the thief of his cattle; the thief proves to be a lion, and he must vow yet greater sacrifices to escape it himself. Prayers for the city that it may be free from dissension, trouble, and untimely death, again "that the Greeks may have prosperity," that barley, wine, and figs may be abundant, that women may bear children, that the citizens regain all good things they have lost, and that weapons of war be no longer needed,[5] — such prayers show a truer sense of dependence on the gods. Only a few writers like Aeschylus and Pindar and Xenophon give any real spiritual content to prayer.[6]

The choice of the right god when one prayed was no light matter. In the country Socrates prayed to Pan; Zeus Boulaios received the prayers of the assembly, Zeus Ktesios, prayers in the home.[7] Women ordinarily prayed to Demeter and Persephone, or in love matters to Aphrodite.[8] The choruses in the drama invoke the greater gods of their native city. Before battle men

[1] Demosthenes, 18. 1; Plutarch, *Pericles*, 8, p. 156.

[2] *E.g.* Demosthenes, 3. 18; 18. 89.

[3] Xenophon, *Mem.* 1. 3. 2. Cp. [Plato] *Alcib.* 148 B-149; Plutarch, *Inst. Lacon.* 27, p. 239 A.

[4] Babrius, 23.

[5] Athenaeus, 15, p. 694 C; Aristophanes, *Pax*, 1320 f; cp. *Aves*, 878 f.

[6] Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 670; Pindar, *Olym.* 13. 115; *Pyth.* 1. 29; *Nem.* 8. 35; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2. 2. 14.

[7] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 279 B; Antiphon, 6. 45; Isaeus, 8. 16.

[8] Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 286 f.

prayed to the Muses, perhaps because they were attendants of the archer god Apollo.[1] The lead plates recovered at Dodona[2] show that one of the frequent questions propounded to the oracle was the question as to what god should be invoked for aid under some special conditions. In Homer men prayed to the gods with whom they had some personal connection; in later times they sought the god presiding over that special province in which their request fell. The *name* of the god, however, was not at all so important as, for instance, in India or at Rome.

The grounds for expecting prayer to be answered were much the same as in the epic: because the request was a just one, because the man was a worshipper of the god, because the god pitied his need.[3] Commonly there was an appeal to remember the sacrifices that had been offered, coupled with vows of special sacrifices in case the prayer was answered. There was no assurance in the mind of the worshipper that the god would hear or grant his prayer.[4] Impurity or sin of the worshipper might stand in the way. Some things in the rule of the world were fixed by divine decree and could not be changed by prayer. Moreover it was necessary that the man work with the god, if he was to gain his petition: the carter whose wagon was stuck in the mud must goad on his oxen and push the wheels before Heracles would help him.[5]

Thanksgiving rarely went with petition as a part of prayer. When a state was freed from danger a special sacrifice was offered (χαριστήριον), and in a few instances this sacrifice was repeated year after year.[6] The individual expressed his gratitude to the god ordinarily by a votive offering.[7] A real sacrifice of thanks-

[1] Plutarch, *Lycurg.* 21, p. 53.

[2] Carapanos, *Dodone et ses ruines*, pl. 34–36.

[3] *Just Cause*, Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 783; *Former Worship*, Herodotus, 1. 87; Sophocles, *Electra*, 1376, *Future Worship*, Aeschylus, *Eum.* 287 f.; *Personal Relation*, Isocrates, 9. 14; *Pity*, Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 215.

[4] Pindar, *Olym.* 8. 8; Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 1. 6. 6; Hesiod, *Erga*, 725; Aeschylus, *Agam.* 396.

[5] Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 1. 6. 5–6; Babrius, 20.

[6] Plutarch, *de gloria Ath.* 7, p. 349 F.

[7] See § 5 *infra*, p. 92 f. Cp. Xenophon, *Ages.* 11. 2; *Anth. Pal.* 6. 174; 6. 203, etc.

giving is described by Xenophon: the prayer is, "Zeus Patroos, Helios, and ye other gods, receive these offerings because ye have granted many favors and as the expression of thanksgiving for granting me guidance by omens."[1]

Is such prayer religious? It can of course be interpreted as a mere bargain with the gods; there is little doubt that the case sometimes lay thus in the mind of the worshipper; it seems to me, however, that without question a genuine religious feeling did commonly exist, that the prayer was ordinarily a request from real gods and the votive offering was something other than mere payment of a debt incurred. Certainly the prayers for moral guidance and help which occur in Pindar, the prayer of Xenophon's knight[2] that he may please the gods and do his duty in thought, word, and deed, and many prayers in the Attic drama, rise far above any mere bargain with the gods.

No sharp line exists between prayer and the prayer-hymn. The paeans to Apollo, the dithyrambs to Dionysus, the processional hymns (*προσόδια*), the hymns sung with the sacred dance about the altar, are a most important part of religious worship.[3] No doubt each temple had its own ritual hymns.[4] The hymns of Isyllus at Epidaurus and the hymns recently found at Delphi are examples of hymns actually used in worship.[5] They illustrate how invocation of the god, recital of his deeds, and petition were combined in connection with sacrifice.

When men appeared before the gods they stood with bare heads, or in extreme need they might grasp the feet of the divine image.[6] Their attitude expressed trust rather than humility or fear; the

[1] Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 8. 7. 3; cp. 4. 1. 2.

[2] Xenophon, *Hipp.* 1. 1.

[3] Pausanias, 10. 7. 2; Proclus in Photius, *Bibl.* 985; Athenaeus, 14, p. 619 B.

[4] Aristotle, *Pol.* 5 (8). 7. p. 1341 b; Plutarch, *de mus.* 6, p. 1133 B; *C.I.G.* 2715.

[5] Wilamowitz, *Isyllos von Epidauros*, 1886; *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 17 (1893) 561 f.; 18 (1894) 345 f.; 19 (1895) 393 f.; Fairbanks, "The Greek Paean," *Cornell Studies*, XII.

[6] *E.g.* Sophocles, *Elec.* 453; Voulliéme, *Quomodo veteres adoraverint;* "Attitudes of Worship in Greece," *The Biblical World*, 1897, 98 f.

Greek did not kneel or bow his head, but looked toward the god with glad confidence. In presenting a sacrifice he raised his right hand, palm out, as though he would touch the god; in need he held out both hands, palm up, as though he would grasp the god or receive the gift he craved.[1] Without any trace of the mystical or magical, his prayer was a request from a god whose interest in him and care for him he did not question.

The *curse* is a prayer (*ἀρά*) not for good to one's self, but for evil to another, a form of prayer common among the Hebrews, though it finds little place in Christianity. At Athens the herald pronounced a curse on traitors at the opening of each assembly; on criminals who were beyond the reach of direct punishment by the state, punishment was invoked from the gods; temples were protected by curses against any who should desecrate them.[2] Thus a curse was pronounced by the Eumolpidae on the absent Alcibiades for sacrilege, and when he was acquitted of the charge the curse was formally withdrawn.[3]

The curses of individuals belong to a different sphere. It is characteristic of the unorganized state of Greek religion that Olympian gods were not invoked in these curses, but that the magical element was in the ascendant. Where the appeal for vengeance was made to gods, it was directed to the gods of the lower regions.[4] It was not enough to utter the curse; in order to make it truly effective it was written on lead tablets and buried by the house of the cursed person or in the shrine of some chthonic god.[5] "I bind tongue, hands, feet, etc. of A. B." is a common formula; the reason for the curse is omitted. Oftentimes the writing is confused, confused enough to puzzle the person against whom it is directed, but clear enough for the gods to understand.

A third group includes curses against those who might disturb

[1] *E.g. Iliad*, 5. 174; Euripides, *Elec.* 592.

[2] Demosthenes, 23. 97; Isocrates, 4. 157; Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 584; *C.I.G.* 2919.

[3] Diodorus Sic. 13. 69; Plutarch, *Alcib.* 22, p. 202; 33, p. 210.

[4] *Iliad*, 9. 566 f.; but cp. *Odyssey*, 17. 494.

[5] *C.I.G.* 5773; Newton, *Discoveries in Cnidos*, II. 2. 720 f.; Wünsch, *Defixionum tabellae Atticae.*

a grave, either to rob it of valuables or to place in it the corpse of one who had no right there. Curses invoking the vengeance of the gods of the dead on those who disturbed the grave are not infrequently found buried with the dead.[1]

The *oath* is nothing but a curse which a man or a group of men place on themselves in case they break their word. In the epic

FIG. 19. — RELIEF FROM THE ASCLEPIEUM AT ATHENS

The worshipper at the left grasps the altar with his right hand in the presence of Asclepius and his daughter Epione.

Achilles and Hector swear by their sceptres that they are stating the truth; Agamemnon invokes the gods to punish him as a perjurer if he has harmed Briseis; when the issue of war is staked on a duel, wine is mixed and poured out, and sheep are slain, with a prayer to Zeus, the all-seeing sun, rivers, and the earth, that they

[1] Rohde, *Psyche*, 630 f. and references there cited.

guard the oath.[1] The ritual is symbolic, for the prayer is added that the perjurer's blood may be poured out like the wine, that he may die like the sheep. The skill in false swearing which Hermes gave Autolycus seems to be the power to deceive his associates without rendering himself liable to the curse of the oath.[2]

The form of the oath in Greece was to pledge something valuable, the sceptre as the sign of royal power, or one's life, or one's welfare, or one's children, with a prayer that the gods take them away if the oath were broken.[3] In treaties between states it was customary to invoke as witnesses one or more of the chief gods of each state. In common life at Athens, if one may judge from the comedies of Aristophanes, Poseidon was frequently invoked in oaths. The oath of Socrates, "by the goose," was a satire on the ready use of oaths by his countrymen. Very solemn oaths were taken at a shrine, sometimes grasping the altar of the god, as though to be sure the gods heard the oath.[4] As the Homeric heroes shed blood and poured out wine with an oath as symbolizing the death that should come to them if their oath were broken, so Olympian gods swore by the Styx, the river of death, as if invoking death on the god who swore falsely.[5]

At Athens citizens swore allegiance to the state, every official took oath on entering and leaving office, and the oath was administered to those who came before the courts. As the officials, in particular the jurors, were numerous, this form of oath was far more common than in our own day. Perjury, however, was not punished by the state; the oath remained a matter of religion, binding only on those who feared the gods.

The ordeal may be regarded as a form of oath.[6] The guards in Sophocles's *Antigone* are ready to take hot irons in their hands, to go through fire, or to swear by the gods that they are guiltless.

[1] *Iliad*, 1. 233; 10. 321; 9. 132; 3. 103 f., 269 f. [2] *Odyssey*, 19. 396.

[3] Sophocles, *Trach.* 1189; Lysias, 12. 10; 32. 13; Lycurgus, *Leocr.* 79.

[4] Andocides, 1. 98, 126; Thucydides, 5. 50; Lycurgus, *Leocr.* 20; Demosthenes, 23. 68.

[5] Hesiod, *Theog.* 784 f.; cp. Dümmler, *Delphika*, 1894.

[6] Sophocles, *Ant.* 264 f.; Pausanias, 7. 25. 8; cp. Bekker, *Charikles*, 1. 278 f.

To drink the blood of a bull is mentioned as a characteristic Greek ordeal.[1] The references to such ordeals in which a man submits his case to the gods are few, nor does the practice find any place in Greek courts of law.

**5. Forms of Worship**: (*b*) *Votive offerings, processions, athletic contests.* — The Greek votive offering was a gift to some god, ordinarily in acknowledgment of special blessing.[2] It was often promised beforehand, as Odysseus promised to make rich gifts (the arms of Dolon and a sacrifice) to Athena, and Hector vowed to decorate Apollo's temple with the arms of the conquered.[3] In great need Hecabe carried a beautiful garment to the temple of Athena and laid it on the knees of the goddess to secure her favor.[4] When Telemachus thinks Odysseus a god, he prays, "Be gracious," and promises sacrifices and golden gifts; so the companions of Odysseus think to propitiate Helios.[5] Garments and gold accompany the thank-offerings of Aegisthus; Achilles offers to Patroclus the hair which had been vowed to Spercheius in case he returned home in safety; a tithe of agricultural products is mentioned in the story of Artemis and the Calydonian boar.[6] In a word men appear before a god, as before

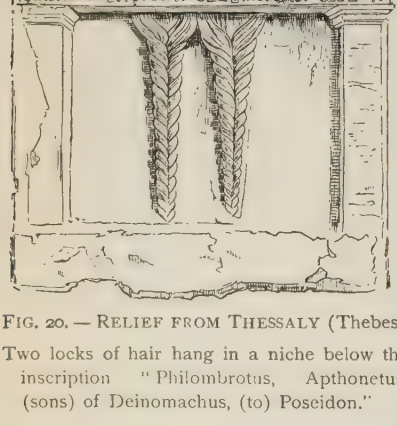

FIG. 20. — RELIEF FROM THESSALY (Thebes)

Two locks of hair hang in a niche below the inscription "Philombrotus, Apthonetus, (sons) of Deinomachus, (to) Poseidon."

[1] Aristophanes, *Equit.* 83; Pausanias, 7. 25. 13.

[2] See Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 218 f.; Reisch, *Die griechische Weihgeschenke*; and especially Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, 1902.

[3] *Iliad*, 10. 463, 570; 7. 81 f.

[4] *Iliad*, 6. 303.

[5] *Odyssey*, 16. 185; 12. 346 f.

[6] *Odyssey*, 3. 274; *Iliad*, 23. 146, cp. 10. 15; 9. 534.

a king, with some gift; the purpose may be to secure the god's favor, or it may be to maintain friendly relations, as when the host sends away his guest with a gift.

In later times the votive gift is either a thank-offering, pure and simple, or the payment of a vow. Such gifts were offered by the state in gratitude for signal divine favor, such as victory in war or delivery from pestilence; tithes or first-fruits were also brought to certain shrines in gratitude for the regular harvests. At the shrine of Demeter at Eleusis, for instance, offerings of the first-fruits were received regularly from many Greek states and constituted a considerable part of the regular income of the shrine.[1] The temple of Apollo at Phigaleia was erected in gratitude for deliverance from the plague.[2] The statue of Apollo the Averter by Calamis, that of the Locust Apollo (assigned to Pheidias), the Hermes carrying a ram at Tanagra, commemorated special cases of divine favor.[3] The victory at Marathon led the Athenians to build a treasure-house for votive offerings at Delphi, and later to erect the statue of Athena Promachos on the Acropolis.[4] The temple of Zeus at Olympia is said to have been built with the spoils of war.[5] The arms of the enemy might be dedicated in a "trophy," or hung in a temple, as shields were fastened on the architrave of the Parthenon.[6] After the battle of Salamis, ships were dedicated to the gods; the serpent tripod set up at Delphi after Plataea is one of the most interesting of these offerings;

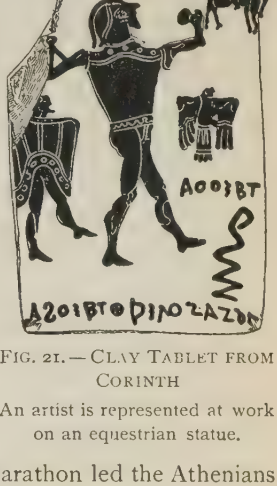

FIG. 21. — CLAY TABLET FROM CORINTH

An artist is represented at work on an equestrian statue.

1 *C.I.A.*, IV. 1. 2, p. 59, no. 27 b.
2 Pausanias, 8. 41. 8.
3 Pausanias, 1. 3. 4; 1. 24. 8; 9. 22. 1.
4 Pausanias, 10. 11. 5; 1. 28. 2.
5 Pausanias, 5. 10. 2.
6 Arrian, *Anab.* 1. 16. 7; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 16, p. 273; cp. Pausanias, 5. 10. 4.

the Colossus of Rhodes was an offering from the spoils of war.[1]

The votive gifts of individuals illustrate much the same principle. It is probable that the farmer made some offering of first-fruits to the gods; the hunter and fisherman dedicated tokens of their success; merchants and manufacturers sought favor of the gods by giving specimens of their handiwork or their tools, representations of men at work, and occasional gifts of money, if not regular tithes.[2] Men healed from illness expressed their gratitude by dedicating an image of the healing god, or of the snake of Asclepius, of the cured member, of a surgical instrument, or perhaps some utensil for the temple service.[3] The thirsty soldier dedicated a metal frog to indicate how he found water; a votive lion suggested the shepherd's escape from danger; the traveller rescued at sea brought to the gods many a token of his gratitude.[4] The warrior might offer to the gods either arms taken from the enemy, or the arms in which he had won victory, or some relief depicting divine aid in battle.[5] The successful

FIG. 22. — MARBLE RELIEF

A man whose leg has been cured offers a model of the leg to a god of healing.

[1] Herodotus, 9. 80 f.; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 34. 41.
[2] Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, 39 f.
[3] Rouse, *ibid.*, 187 f.
[4] *Anthol. Pal.* 6. 43; 6. 221; Rouse, *ibid.*, 226 f.
[5] Rouse, *ibid.*, 98 f.

athlete dedicated his quoit or jumping weights, the wreath he had won, perhaps a statue of the god, or a statue of himself.[1] So the victors in other contests brought to the gods either their prizes, such as the tripod given for the successful tragedy at Athens, or other token of their gratitude. The officials who were honored with a crown from the state, dedicated this in some temple where it stood as a memorial of their honor.[2] The important incidents of family life, marriage, birth, puberty, led to votive gifts, such as the dolls and maiden's garments dedicated to Artemis before marriage.[3] The worshippers at Eleusis sometimes dedicated the garments in which they had been initiated; an ancient votive statue represents one Rhombos or Kombos carrying the calf he had sacrificed to the gods; at most shrines are found dedicated vessels used in sacrifice, models of animals sacrificed, and small images of the god worshipped at the shrine.[4] The sword of Pelops, the spear of Achilles, the necklace of Eriphyle, the cup of Nestor,[5] were among the votive offerings pointed out in temples to visitors of later time.

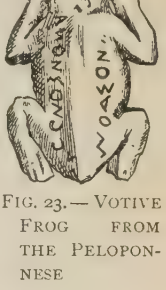

FIG. 23.— VOTIVE FROG FROM THE PELOPONNESE

On the frog is inscribed "Amon son of Sonous to Brason" (perhaps a local hero).

It appears from the above summary that the gifts of the state were likely to be temples, lands, means of income, or objects to adorn the shrine. The gifts of the individual had more definite reference to his own experiences. He might give an image of the god; more often he brought trophies, crowns, instruments of his craft, a representation of himself as warrior, athlete, craftsman, or worshipper, — some token of the blessing he had received from the god. The nature of the gift indicates the belief that the gods were like men, ready to help dependent friends and pleased by some token which was brought them in recognition of their help.

[1] Rouse, *ibid.*, 149 f.
[2] Rouse, *ibid.*, 259 f.
[3] Rouse, *ibid.*, 240 f.
[4] Rouse, *ibid.*, 274 f.
[5] Pausanias, 6. 19. 6; 3. 3. 8; 9. 41. 2; Athenaeus, 11, p. 466 E.

While vows and votive gifts in Homer ordinarily accompanied some request, the fundamental meaning of the later offerings was the recognition of the god's help in human need; whether they took the form of a tax on man's gain (like the tithe), or of a payment for divine help, or of an informal gift in token of gratitude, all alike expressed man's sense of dependence on the gods. We have seen that men could make their gifts at the same time a means of honor to themselves. With the degeneration of religious sentiment the votive wreath and the portrait statue lost their religious meaning and became a means of self-glorification.

The number, value, and artistic importance of the votive offerings which were accumulated at the greater shrines of Greece made them at the same time treasuries and museums. According to an inscription of about the year 180 B.C. the temple of Apollo on the island of Delos possessed 1600 vessels of gold and silver, many of them valuable for their inset gems and artistic reliefs as well as for their weight of precious metal, in addition to rings, necklaces, crowns or wreaths of gold, tripods, statues, etc.[1] The protection and care of these objects brought no small responsibility on the officials of the temple.

The procession and the celebration of athletic contests at religious festivals may be mentioned in connection with votive offerings, for by these means also the gods were honored in much the same way as human rulers, though in ancient Greece little was known of processions other than religious. The religious procession is not at all unfamiliar to-day. Tokens of worship are still carried through the streets by earnest throngs, in time of need or of joy or again at some recurring church festival. Thus the church still expresses homage to God and to its saints as a state honors its ruler. At each great festival the people gathered in a procession which conducted to the shrine the animals and utensils for sacrifice. At the Panathenaea the new robe for Athena was carried in the greatest procession of all, the procession pictured on the Parthenon frieze.[2] A regular procession street led from the

[1] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 588. [2] Cp. § 8, *infra*, p. 114.

gate of the city to the market-place, and then on to the entrance of the Acropolis. Before the dramatic representations in the theatre, poet and actor and people joined in solemn procession bringing sacrifices to Dionysus. At these and other great festivals the purpose of the procession was to present gifts and sacrifices to the gods with all possible honor from a large number of people.

The athletic contest, far as it may seem from our conception of religious worship, resembles the procession in that it also was a means of doing honor to human rulers. In the *Iliad* elaborate games were celebrated by Achilles in honor of his dead friend Patroclus.[1] What pleased the living man would gratify his ghost; thus feasting and athletic games became part of the funeral of great men. Perhaps by transfer from the funeral, perhaps as an exhibition of human prowess brought as an offering to the god, such games became a regular part of the great religious festivals. They were celebrated to Athena at Athens, to Demeter at Eleusis, to Apollo at Delphi; at Olympia they quite eclipsed other elements in the worship of Zeus.[2] In the Olympic games contests in wrestling, boxing, running, and throwing dated back to very early times; chariot races and races on horseback added to the splendor of the festival as time went on, and the number of contests was increased by dividing the contestants into classes by age. In the great games of Greece (at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and the Isthmus) the prize was simply a wreath from trees sacred to the god. The character of the prize, the religious procession, and finally the sacrifices, kept in evidence the religious character of the games and of the shrines where they were conducted.

**6. Forms of Worship**: (*c*) *The sacrificial meal.* — That worship should consist in killing pigs or bulls with elaborate ceremony, or that blood should have any efficacy in appeasing a god, is totally foreign to our religious ideas; symbolism borrowed from the worship of the ancient Hebrews alone gives it some place in religious thought to-day. In almost every form of primitive religion, however, the communion meal in which gods and men share

[1] *Iliad*, 23. 257 f.

[2] Cp. § 8, *infra*, p. 117 f.

consecrated food, and the use of blood to pacify angry deities or to remove some taint from man, constitute a large part of worship. The communion meal will be considered in this section, propitiatory and mystic sacrifice in the following.

The normal form of worship in Greece consisted in the sacrifice of a domestic animal at the altar with hymn and prayer; parts of it were burned for the god, the rest eaten by the worshippers. The word "to sacrifice" (ἱερεύειν) is regularly used as meaning "to kill for food." The practice of killing animals in a household sacrifice when meat was needed continued in the Athens of Pericles; even when meat was to be sold in a butchershop, some practices of sacrifice were probably observed.[1]

In the epic the occasions of sacrifice were (1) in time of danger or before some important undertaking, and (2) at any banquet when flesh was eaten.[2] The swineherd Eumaeus sacrificed a pig with prayer for his master, that he might have meat to set before the unrecognized Odysseus; every banquet of the princes began with sacrifice and prayer.[3] Special banquet sacrifices were instituted when a god indicated his presence either by some special sign or by granting success in war. Before setting out for Troy, before other journeys, before battle, this type of sacrifice was offered.[4] A banquet sacrifice was successful in propitiating Apollo, but Odysseus offered a ram to Zeus in vain.[5] The occasions of sacrifice in Homer are in harmony with the view of the gods as superior members of society; when the gods ate with men, they, like other guests, were united with men by ties of guest-friendship.

This same conception held good later. The individual sacrificed when he wished meat for a banquet. The events of domestic life — birth, coming of age, marriage — furnished special occasions of sacrifice and banquet. In such cases the sacrifice

[1] Plato, *Politia*, 1, p. 328 C; Athenaeus, 14, p. 659 F; Artemidorus, *Oneir.* 5. 2, p. 253.

[2] *Odyssey*, 14. 250; cp. "The Significance of Sacrifice in the Homeric Poems," *The New World*, 1898.

[3] *E.g. Iliad*, 2. 402 f.; 11. 772.

[4] *Iliad*, 2. 305 f.; 2. 402 f.

[5] *Iliad*, 1. 457; *Odyssey*, 9. 551.

would regularly be performed at home. When a vow was to be paid, the worshipper would present the sacrifice at the shrine of the god to whom the vow was made, and often the festal meal would take place at the shrine itself. In the regular worship of the state, sacrifices of this type were offered at each shrine yearly or monthly in accordance with the religious calendar there in

FIG. 24. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Stamnos, Munich)

A bull is given water before being sacrificed; the tripod, which was given as a prize in dithyrambic contests in honor of Dionysus, indicates the occasion of the sacrifice.

force. Additional sacrifices were called for when some important undertaking was begun; if an expedition proved successful, or the state received other special marks of divine care, a thank-offering of this type was in place.[1] Often a vow was made before the battle, as at Marathon the Athenians vowed to sacrifice to Artemis as many goats as there were Persians killed,[2] in which

[1] Thucydides, 8. 70; Xenophon, *Hell.* 7. 2. 23; 4. 3. 14. Cp. Lasaulx, *Studien des klassischen Altertums*, 264 f.

[2] Cp. Xenophon, *Anab.* 3. 2. 12.

case the payment of the vow would be a great sacrificial meal of thanksgiving. The hekatomb ("hundred oxen") early became a general designation for the great sacrifices offered by the state. In a word the communion meal, the "meat offering" of our Old Testament, is the appropriate offering to the Olympian gods on all occasions except one; when they have clearly shown that they are angry, man does not propose this meal which he shares with the gods. Otherwise, in time of doubt or joy or as part of daily life, men worshipped the gods by a ritual which emphasized the social ties uniting them with the gods.

In preparation for the communion meal, it was necessary first to select a suitable animal. It must be a domestic animal, from the flock or herd raised by human hand, and a perfect specimen of its kind. At some shrines the sex, age, and the color of the victim were determined in the ritual; *e.g.* at the Panathenaic festivals cows were offered, while Poseidon preferred a black bull. Occasionally the ritual required a special kind of wood; in sacrifices to Zeus at Olympia only white poplar was used on the altar, and if the fire became defiled by the presence of death or from any other cause, pure fire must be procured, it might be from a house near by, or from Apollo's shrine at Delphi.[1] Then those who were to share the sacrifice put on festal array, white garments, and wreaths of flowers on their heads; the animal also was decorated with garlands and sometimes the horns of oxen were covered with gold leaf.[2]

The ritual of sacrifice was somewhat as follows: Under the direction of the priest (or father or king) a basket containing the sacrificial utensils and a bowl of water were borne around the altar from left to right.[3] After the water had been consecrated by thrusting into it a brand from the altar, the worshippers dipped their hands in it, and it was sprinkled on altar, victim, and offerer.

[1] Pausanias, 5. 14. 2; Plutarch, *Arist.* 20, p. 331; *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 18 (1894) 87, 92.

[2] *Odyssey*, 4. 759–766; Aeschines, 3. 77; Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 447 f.; *Odyssey*, 3. 426; *C.I.A.* IV. 1. 2, p. 59, no. 27 b.

[3] Euripides, *Elec.* 800 f.; Aristophanes, *Pax*, 948 f.; *Lys.* 1129; *Odyssey*, 3. 441 f.

Salted barley-corns from the basket were thrown on the animal's head and into the altar fire. From the head of the victim, standing unbound before the altar, a lock of hair was cut and burned, and libation was poured on the altar with prayer.[1] The preliminary rites were thus completed.

After silence had been proclaimed, the music of flutes began, and the animal was slain.[2] The larger animals were felled with

FIG. 25. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Krater, Boston)
In the presence of "Teiresias" and several attendants the sacrificing priest or king is about to sprinkle barley-corns on the altar.

a blow from the sacrificial axe; then the head was raised toward heaven, and the throat cut in such wise that the blood would spurt on the altar, or would be caught in a vessel and poured on the altar. At this point, in Homer, the women raised a cry of worship (ὀλολυγή).[3] After the animal had been skinned and cut up the inner parts were first disposed of, a part burned on the

[1] Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 295; *Odyssey*, 14. 421 f.; *Iliad*, 3. 273.
[2] *Odyssey*, 3. 443, 449; *Iliad*, 1. 459; cp. Herodotus, 1. 132.
[3] *Odyssey*, 3. 450; cp. 4. 767.

altar with incense, the remainder roasted and eaten. If the entrails were of normal shape and color, it was an omen that the sacrifice was acceptable to the gods.[1] In the epic, men wrapped the thigh pieces (μηρία) in fat and burned them on the altar; later the end of the back and tail (ὀσφύς), along with other bones on which more or less meat had been left, were burned with a libation. Then came the feast in which the offerers shared the roasted meat, while music and dance expressed men's joy in the service of the god. At some great festivals, the whole people shared the banquet and hundreds of victims were consumed.

If we ask the question as to what of real worship there was in butchering an animal to feast on its flesh with song and carousal, several answers may be given.[2] The motive might be fear, as though the gods were hungry wolves diverted from attacking men by the pieces of meat thrown to them. While references to the envy of the gods lend some color to such a view, yet in the Greek banquet-sacrifice the gods are always represented as benevolent beings, ready to bless men who did them honor. There is no question that the "fragrance of fat thighs" burned on the altar[3] was thought to lure the gods to the presence of their worshippers. So Poseidon left Olympus and went to the distant Aethiopians to enjoy the feasts they prepared, and on another occasion all the gods went there on the same errand.[4] To burn a portion of the victim was to send it up to the gods. And the gods were pleased both because they liked the food, and because they liked to be honored with splendid ceremonial and abundant victims. In general the larger the sacrifices the more one might count on the divine favor to be gained by means of them irrespective of the righteousness of the worshipper.[5] Only rarely does some Greek writer speak of the spirit of the worshippers as more important than the

[1] See Chap. i, § 6, p. 49.

[2] Cp. "The Significance of Sacrifice in the Homeric Poems," *The New World*, June, 1898.

[3] *E.g. Iliad*, 8. 549.

[4] *Odyssey*, 1. 22; *Iliad*, 1. 423.

[5] Plato, *Politia*, 2, p. 362 C; *Iliad*, 1. 65; *Odyssey*, 3. 273; cp. Xenophon, *Anab.* 5. 7. 32.

number of animals offered.[1] Mention is made of the spirit of piety which leaves some meat on the bones that are burned on the altar, as compared with the mean habit of scraping the bones clean. In origin, it would seem that the life of each animal was brought to the altar (*i.e.* the blood was sprinkled on the altar) because the animal was in some sense sacred to the god. Practically the sense of worship lay in the feeling that the gods shared the banquet with men; the gods were honored when men dedicated to them flesh and bread and wine to be shared in communion meal; in this meal men gained a fresh sense that the gods were present with their worshippers to bless them.

Along with portions of the animal or as a separate sacrifice, fruit or cakes were sometimes burned on the altar that the gods might also share these portions of the feast.[2] Occasionally poor people offered cakes in the shape of animals, or fruit fixed to imitate animals, while at the Diasia in Athens these were the only sacrifices permitted.[3] Instead of being burned, cakes might be presented before the god (like the Hebrew shewbread) and later eaten by the priests. To the goddesses of nature, Demeter, Leto, Artemis, and the great mother of the gods, it was only natural to offer as a sacrifice the fruits of nature; in the worship of the home, fruit and flowers seem to have been the regular offering.[4] With this gift of fruit and flowers should be mentioned the use of incense; it was burned with the burnt sacrifice on the altar, and it was offered in censers (*θυμιατήρια*) in the temples before the images of the gods.[5]

Libations of wine mixed with water are frequently poured out to the gods. The epic heroes[6] pour wine on the altar at the sacrifice, and at the banquet a libation is made before drinking. A

[1] Isocrates, 2. 20; [Plato], *Alcibiad.* 13, p. 150.

[2] *Odyssey*, 15. 222; Athenaeus, 4, p. 146 F (Menander).

[3] Pollux, 1. 30; Suidas, *s.v. βοὸς ἔβδομος*; Thucydides, 1. 126. 6, and schol.; Pausanias 1. 26. 5; 8. 2. 3.

[4] Pausanias, 8. 37. 7; Xenophon, *Anab.* 5. 3. 9; *ἐπάργματα*, Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 630.

[5] Von Fritze, *Die Rauchopfer bei den Griechen*, 1894.

[6] K. Bernhardi, *Das Trankopfer bei Homer*, 1885.

vow or prayer is more effective if it is attended with a gift of wine to the gods; before any important undertaking if a burnt sacrifice is not offered, at least wine is freshly mixed and poured out with a prayer for success.

In later usage libations at the sacrifice and at the banquet are universal; the practice of making libations of wine to reënforce a prayer is not so often mentioned as in the epic. In these instances the libation is made from mixed wine and water, since the gods, like men, did not drink wine unmixed.[1] The Athenians offered a mixture of milk, honey, and water (without wine, *μελίκρατον*) to such lesser gods as the Muse Mnemosyne, Eos, Helios, Selene, the Nymphs, and to Aphrodite Ourania.[2] Zeus Hypatos in Athens received no animal offering and no wine. The Eumenides and gods of the lower world generally received "soothing libations" without wine.[3] In some cults it is possible that this peculiarity dated back to a time when wine was not yet in use; in other instances it may be due to the feeling that wine is not "soothing," not a suitable drink for gods easily made angry.

FIG. 26. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Kylix, Athens)

A youth with kylix and pitcher pours a libation on an altar; inscription, "Athenodotos Kalos."

[1] *E.g.* Thucydides, 6. 32. 1.

[2] Schol. Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 100 (Polemon).

[3] Pausanias, 1. 26. 5; Aeschylus, *Eum.* 107; Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 100, 481; Euripides, *Iph. Taur.* 160 f.

**7. Forms of Worship:** (*d*) *Propitiatory sacrifice, purification.* — To angry gods or gods easily roused to anger the Greeks offered sacrifices very different from the glad communion meal described in the preceding section. There is little doubt that human sacrifice was occasionally practised by the Greeks, though it is difficult to find well authenticated cases of it in Greek history. When the Greeks set out for Troy, story describes the sacrifice of Iphigeneia,[1] and that of Polyxena as they set out for home. Creon is said to have sacrificed his son to save Thebes from a besieging army, while Codrus gave up his own life to save Athens on a similar occasion.[2] Epimenides is reported to have sacrificed a youth when he purified Athens from the plague. These cases are mythical, but they represent the principle that when the lives of many are in danger from war or plague, the voluntary sacrifice of some man may turn aside the anger of gods. If the story could be traced to some earlier authority than Plutarch, we might easily believe that Themistocles sacrificed three captive Persians before the battle of Salamis.[3] In the worship of Zeus Lykaios in Arcadia, of Zeus at Rhodes, of Apollo at Leucas, human sacrifice is said to have been offered up to the time when it was strictly forbidden by the emperor Libanius.[4] A criminal condemned to death, however, was the victim; his death in the service of religion was said to purify the city from evil.[5]

In actual practice the propitiatory sacrifices before a battle or a voyage were of animals, sometimes said to be substituted for men. At some few regular centres of worship, particularly in cults of Dionysus and of Artemis, goats or cattle were also said to be substituted for human beings, and human garments were put on the animals as if the gods would be better pleased by such an illusion.[6] It is, then, entirely possible that some of the propitiatory sacrifices to be described in this section involved the sub-

[1] ἔθυσεν αὑτοῦ παῖδα . . . ἐπῳδὸν Θρηκίων ἀημάτων, Aeschylus, *Agam.* 1417.
[2] Euripides, *Phoen.* 911 f.; Lycurgus, *Leocr.* 86 f.
[3] Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 13; cp. *Aristides*, 9.
[4] Pausanias, 8. 2. 3 and 6; Strabo, 10 p. 452. [5] Harpocration, *s.v.* φαρμακός.
[6] Pausanias, 9. 8. 2; Aelian, *De nat. anim.* 12. 34; *Paroemiogr. graec.* 1, p. 402.

stitution of animals where men had once been sacrificed; the principle, however, would hold good in an extremely small number of cases, and can in no sense be used to explain this type of sacrifice. As for the fact that these propitiatory sacrifices are not mentioned in the epic,[1] it can hardly be explained on the ground that they are not properly Greek. They are not normally offered to the Olympian gods, the gods of the epic, consequently there was no occasion for mentioning them. The fundamental fact that the epic neglects one whole side of Greek religion, the worship of local spirits, agricultural deities, and the dead, together with magical rites and propitiatory rites, must be considered in another connection.[2]

The ordinary sacrifice of propitiatory character differed from the communion meal in occasion, in ritual, and in the gods to whom it was offered. The communion-meal offering assumed that the gods were favorable, whether it was offered when they had already signalized their favor or before some important undertaking. On the other hand the propitiatory sacrifice meant that men felt the anger of the gods in the danger or trouble which was already on them; or again when it was offered before battle or before a voyage or before sowing grain, it was intended to pacify the possible anger of the gods before any damage had been done.[3] The ritual was different. A black animal was ordinarily chosen;[4] it was brought to a low mound of earth (ἐσχάρα) instead of the regular altar; its head was bowed toward the earth and the blood allowed to soak into the ground, for the spirits of evil were mainly spirits of the world below;[5] most important of all it was not tasted by the worshippers, but wholly burned, as though the gods took pleasure in its utter destruction.[6] No libations were made with the sacrifice, nor were the libations on other occasions to these

[1] Apollo is propitiated by a banquet sacrifice, *Iliad*, 1. 447 f.
[2] See Part II, Chap. ii, *infra*.
[3] Herodotus, 6. 112; Xenophon, *Anab.* 1. 8. 15; 4. 3. 17.
[4] Cp. Pausanias, 8. 34. 3.
[5] *Odyssey*, 10. 527, and schol.; Kaibel, *Epigram. graec.* 1034.
[6] Schol. on Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 42.

gods like those to the gods above. Instead of cakes such as men ate, a peculiar cake or porridge (πέλανος) was made of meal, honey, and sometimes poppy seed; this was never tasted, but burned on the low altar of the spirits of the deep.[1] For this ritual, a series of words was used entirely different from those used for the communion meal (σφάγια, ἐναγίζεσθαι, πέλανος, etc.). And the gods were different, or at least different in attitude.[2] They were easily angered, dangerous to approach even when they had rich blessings to bestow; many times the fearful evidence they had given of their anger was the occasion for these sacrifices. In this group of divinities were included (1) the dead, and those gods who were rulers of souls; (2) local spirits, called heroes, who were regarded in much the same way as the dead; (3) agricultural deities; and (4) many gods of the sea, river gods, and the winds. Occasionally propitiatory sacrifices were offered to some of the Olympian gods, especially when some old nature deity had become merged with a god of Olympus.

So far as the souls of the dead are concerned, their worship will be considered in connection with the rites of burial. The chthonic gods, gods who have to do with souls and the world below, include Hades and Persephone, Hermes conductor of souls, Hecate, the Eumenides, etc. To the rulers of the dead and Hermes is directed the ritual used in the citation of souls, as depicted in the *Persians* of Aeschylus. The Eumenides or Erinyes seem to have been originally the spirits of dead men that have been wronged; they receive propitiatory sacrifices to avert their wrath. These chthonic gods normally received propitiatory sacrifice, though sometimes the communion-meal offering was appropriate.

The worship of heroes, local spirits supposed to be souls of the dead with peculiar powers and associations, is an interesting phase of Greek religion. They seem to be half *souls* lingering by the

[1] Hermes, 29 (1884) 281, 625; Aeschylus, *Pers.* 203; Aristophanes, *Plut.* 661 and schol.

[2] See "The Chthonic Gods of Greek Religion," *Am. Jour. Phil.* 21 (1900) 241 f.

tomb, half *gods* with strange power to bless and to curse; their worship corresponds to their nature in that we find evidence of double sacrifices to some heroes, communion-meal offerings as to gods with the usual ritual, and propitiatory sacrifices of black animals on another altar as to heroes.[1] Because they were easily roused to anger, because plagues and other misfortunes were attributed to heroes, the uneaten propitiatory sacrifice was ordinarily the more appropriate.

FIG. 27.— RELIEF IN THEBES

At the left the "hero" stands beside his horse before a low altar (ἐσχάρα); a line of worshippers at the right bring a pig and a libation.

The worship of agricultural gods is in many places not differentiated from that of the rulers of the dead, for the same mother earth receives the dead and gives birth to the grain. The uncertainty of the crops is understood to mean that agricultural gods are easily provoked to wrath. In the worship of Demeter, goddess of the grain, of Dionysus, god of plant-life, and of Apollo who wards off pestilence from the crops as well as from the flocks, we find propitiatory rites as well as communion-meal offerings; the propitiation here commonly is of the type described below as mystic or purificatory sacrifice.

Other gods who are easily moved to anger also receive propitiatory sacrifices. Artemis, who stood so close to nature, was worshipped in this way before battle; Poseidon, with temper like that of the sea, the Winds, never to be depended on, the River gods, now bringing fertility but soon raging with wild fury, these and

[1] Ἡρακλεῖ σφᾶς ὡς ἥρωι ἐναγίζοντας . . . ὡς θεῷ θύειν, Pausanias, 2. 10. 1; Herodotus, 2. 44; Isocrates, 10. 63; cp. Pausanias, 8. 34. 3.

similar divinities receive sacrifices of this type (σφάγια) when men have occasion to fear their possible wrath.

Although propitiatory sacrifice, like the communion-meal offering, has been reduced to one more or less defined type in the period when we become acquainted with the ritual, it probably represents rites of different origin and different meaning. Only one form, the purification to be considered in the next paragraph, can be clearly differentiated from the others. It seems clear, however, that propitiatory sacrifices were offered to the dead and to gods connected with the dead, because no gift could be so welcome as the blood — sometimes human blood — which was believed to revive their weakened power of thought and consciousness. The body of the animal was burned because it was not safe to treat it in any other way. In the case of the winds, river gods, and sea gods, perhaps such sacrifices were offered because blood was the most potent charm man had at his command. To secure the favor of gods who were or might be angry, a human sacrifice or even an animal substitute might be all that was necessary, an object on which the lightning stroke of wrath was discharged and made harmless. The "envy of the gods" was a familiar thought to the Greeks; Polycrates vainly hoped to avoid it by inflicting on himself the loss of his valuable ring;[1] but that the Greek gods so regularly took pleasure in the destruction of something valuable as to give rise to all sacrifice of this type, does not seem to me a safe principle of explanation.

Rites of purification are not as important in Greek religion as in the religions of many other peoples. Still there does attach to murder, and in fact to death in any form, a taint which incapacitates men to appear before the gods. Childbirth also demands a lustration. Furthermore before marriage and before participating in the mysteries an individual must be purified; at certain seasons and after such troubles as a plague, the city needs purification; before a political assembly or gathering in the theatre the place is

[1] Herodotus, 3. 41.

purified with religious rites to guard against the evil which the possible presence of some polluted person might cause. In the case of murder it is the spirit of the dead man who pursues the murderer until it is appeased;[1] in other cases the taint is conceived as a sort of spiritual entity which inheres in those who come near what defiles, and against which special care is needed. Apparently the rites of purification were originally rites of riddance by which spirits of evil were effectually driven away;[2] with the recognition of all-ruling greater gods, the same rites came to be understood as the means of removing some taint which made these gods angry.

FIG. 28. — SCENE ON A GREEK GEM

The three daughters of Melampus (?) are being purified from their insanity by a bearded priest, who holds above them a young pig and a branch for sprinkling; at the right is a young attendant, at the left possibly Artemis standing beside a column.

In the ceremony of purification the subject sits with veiled head while he is sprinkled with the blood of a sucking pig and prayer is offered;[3] libations without wine accompany the ceremony and cakes are burned on the altar. Under some circumstances sea water or spring water, clay, sulphur, etc., find a place in the ceremony. The skin of a ram sacrificed to Zeus Meilichios (Διὸς κώδιον) had peculiar power to absorb the taint of evil.[4] The murderer flees to another city and seeks purification there as a suppliant; those about to be married or to be initiated in the mysteries are purified by their friends; the assembly-place and theatre are sprinkled with pigs' blood by city officials.[5] It is only when a city or a people is to be purified that some priest or prophet is

[1] Rohde, *Rhein. Mus.* 50 (1895) 6 f. [2] Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 967.

[3] Apollonius Rhod. 4. 702 f. and schol.; Pausanias, 5. 16. 8.

[4] Preller, *Polemon*, 139 f.

[5] Herodotus, 1. 35; Aeschylus, *Eum.* 835, and schol.; Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 653. 68.

needed. In the celebrated case of the plague at Athens after the murder of the Cylonidae, we are told that the seer Epimenides was fetched from Crete to direct the purification.[1] The first step consisted in the removal from the land of all the guilty persons, including the bones of those who had died in the meantime. Then black and white sheep were brought to the altar where the sacrilege had been committed, let loose to follow their own course, and sacrificed on the spot where each chanced to lie down. Some writers add that a youth also was sacrificed. In time of plague Tanagra was purified by Hermes himself who bore a ram on his shoulders around the walls of the city;[2] the evil spirits "entered into" the ram, as into the swine of Gadara, and were borne away.

The regular purifications had to do mainly with agriculture. At the Thesmophoria pigs were thrown into a hole in the ground as a sacrifice to Eubouleus and Persephone; later the decayed remains of the flesh were mixed with seed by superstitious persons.[3] In the early spring at the Diasia individuals offered animals (or cakes in the forms of animals) to propitiate Zeus Meilichios; the purpose apparently was to remove any taint which might cause damage to the crops as the result of divine anger. Again in early summer at the Thargelia danger was averted from the ripening crop by purification of the city; in addition to the sacrifice of animals, two men (*φαρμακοί*) were escorted through the city to gather up all taint of evil; they were then driven from the country, or in earlier time, slain in sacrifice.[4]

The meaning of the rites of purification is to be sought in two directions. First, men felt the necessity of removing the guilt; the murderer must leave the country, before either he or the country can be purified; an animal or a man led through the city with proper rites may attract the taint of evil and carry it off when he is driven from the land; mere washing may be enough to remove

[1] Diogenes Laer. 1. 110; Aristotle, *Athen. Pol.* 1. [2] Pausanias, 9. 22. 1.
[3] *Rhein. Mus.* 25 (1870) 549; cp. Lasaulx, *Studien des classischen Altertums*, 262 f.
[4] Harpocration, *s.v.* *φαρμακός*.

the evil. But secondly, in explaining the use of pigs' blood, it cannot be forgotten that the pig is the favorite sacrifice of Demeter, in a sense the animal sacred to her. When a temple of Aphrodite is to be purified, the blood of her sacred animal, the dove, is used; in the worship of Hecate, the blood of the dog sacred to Hecate purifies the worshipper; so before the mysteries of Demeter the blood of her sacred animal, the pig, is used for the same purpose.[1] In these instances the blood of the sacred animal "purifies" the worshipper by producing a mystic connection between him and the goddess. It is quite possible that in purification for murder, where no particular god is concerned, pigs' blood came to be used by transfer from the worship of the grain goddess.

**8. Worship from the Standpoint of the State; Panhellenic Worship.** — The different elements of worship, which have been described in the last four sections, were used both in the religion of the state and in the religion of the individual and the home. In a state like Athens each element in the political organization had its religious side. The larger family group (γένος) worshipped the ancestral god or hero (θεὸς πατρῷος) from whom descent was claimed;[2] the local deme had its own festivals, some of which dated back to a very early epoch; the political groups of demes (φυλαί) were built upon a religious basis with a common worship of some hero (as Cecrops, Erechtheus, Pandion). The phratry also had its religious festival, known as the Apatouria: on the first day the members of the phratry joined in a common sacrificial meal, on the second sacrifices were offered to Zeus Phratrios and Athena, and on the third day fathers acknowledged their new-born children by enrolling them in the phratry list and offering a sacrifice (μειον) in connection with a banquet for the members of the phratry.[3] On this third day the fathers brought their children of school age to show what progress they had made, and prizes were

[1] *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 13 (1889) 163; Schol. Aristophanes, *Pax*, 277; Schol. Aristophanes, *Ran.* 338; Aelian, *De nat. anim.* 10. 16.

[2] Aristotle, *Athen. Pol.* 21. 6.

[3] *C.I.A.* II. 841 b (Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 439); *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 19 (1895) 1; *Hermes*, 31 (1896) 508.

offered for excellence in repeating selections from the poets.[1] It was part of the marriage ceremony to register the wife as a member of her husband's phratry, on which occasion also the members of the phratry were invited to a sacrificial feast.

FIG. 29. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTINGS (Amphora, Munich)

At the right a young athlete is bearing away a Panathenaic amphora as a prize; the figure at the left carries myrtle twigs and a votive tablet.

The worship at every shrine, as we have seen, was under the supervision of the state; so far as the benefits to be derived from it were concerned, the regular worship was carried on in behalf of the state as a whole, as well as in behalf of individuals. It has been pointed out that all shrines were in the last instance administered by the state through the priests. Special sacrifices before the meeting of the assembly or before battle were offered by city officials for the city-state. In time of plague, the city, under guidance of the Delphic oracle, performed rites of purification to free itself from the taint of evil.[2]

At most shrines the worship centred about one annual festival, and in a few instances we read of temples which were closed all the rest of the year. A regular monthly or even daily worship was

[1] Plato, *Tim.* 21 B.

[2] See Part II, Chap. iii.

not uncommon, while we must assume that many temples were open for worship every day; moreover, though the greater festivals were annual, it was not unusual for the celebration to be especially magnificent once in four years. The Panathenaea at Athens was such an annual festival, which after the time of Peisistratus was celebrated with special pomp every fourth year.

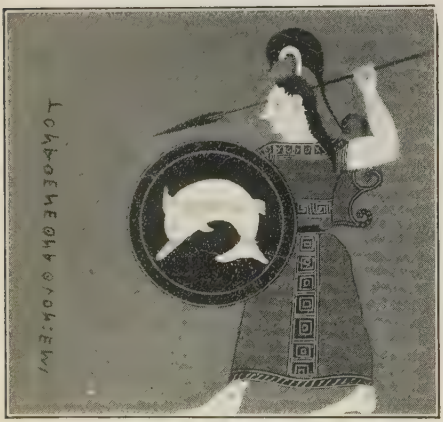

FIG. 30. — SCENE FROM PANATHENAIC AMPHORA (British Museum)

Athena is advancing as into battle; the inscription reads "I am one of the prizes from Athens."

In order to get a clearer conception of the city festival, we may describe briefly the Panathenaea. The arrangements for the festival were in charge of a commission appointed for the purpose. In the fourth century the greater Panathenaea began with musical and gymnastic contests which lasted for several days. On the night before the culminating day (Hekatombaion 28) a torch race was held, a relay race in which that series of runners was victorious which first succeeded in bringing its torch still burning to the goal. Next morning early, the great procession carried to the temple the new garment that chosen maidens had woven for the goddess and embroidered with scenes from the battle of the gods and giants. After Athens had become a sea power, this peplos was stretched like a sail on yards and mast, in this wise to be borne up through the city. There followed in the procession the citizens of Athens, officials religious and secular, old men chosen for their beauty bearing olive boughs (*θαλλοφόροι*), envoys from the col-

onies, victors in the athletic contests, those who bore utensils of sacrifice, priests and attendants driving cattle to be offered to the goddess, and marshals directing the procession. At the great altar before the temple of Athena the animals were sacrificed, that all the people of the city might share the great banquet in honor of the city's goddess. On the last day came a boat race at the Peiraeus, for Athena had brought glory to her city through its fleet. Among the contests of the previous days the war dance (pyrrich) and the combination of chariot and foot race, in which a man (ἀποβάτης) was driven across the stadium only to leap from the chariot and run back to the starting-point, were peculiar to this festival; other athletic contests resembled those at the greater games (*e.g.* at Olympia), except that the prize was a large jar of oil from Athena's sacred grove of olive trees.[1] It is said that Peisistratus introduced the practice of having the Homeric poems recited by bards; Pericles pursued the same policy in adding other musical contests with cithara and flute and song. For these contests the first prize was a gold or silver wreath, with gifts of money for the first five successful contestants. In honor of Athena and of Apollo musical contests were as important as athletic games.

From local festivals of somewhat this type, we may assume that the Panhellenic festivals were developed. Common language and common descent never proved strong enough bands to connect the Greek city-states into one nation; military genius and power of organization were never united long enough to overcome the love of local independence; the influence of a few great shrines was almost the only force tending toward one Greek nation. The Delphic oracle was universally recognized, and at times the congress of states meeting at Delphi had considerable influence in settling minor disputes, or in establishing some principles of interstate law. The games at Delphi, the Isthmus, and Nemea, but far more the games celebrated at Olympia, for the time they were in progress united all the Greek states in one enthusiasm for what was distinctively Greek.

[1] Aristotle, *Athen. Pol.* 60.

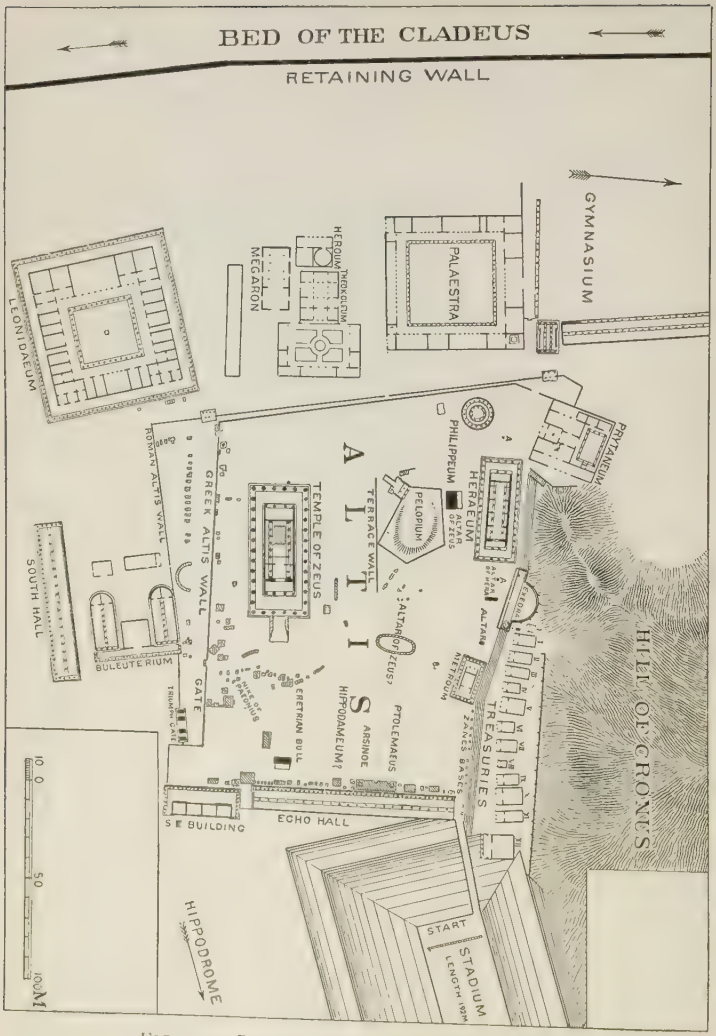


FIG. 31. — PLAN OF THE RUINS AT OLYMPIA

German excavators have laid bare the ruins of the sacred precinct of Zeus at Olympia, the great temple of Zeus from the fifth century, the altar of heaped-up ashes on which the people of Elis offered daily sacrifice, the old temple of Hera, the shrine of the hero Pelops, the prytaneum where the victors were feasted, the gymnasium where the contestants trained, the stadium where the races were held, the treasure-houses for the votive offerings of the different cities, besides many remains of the latter classical period.[1]

In late summer every fourth year heralds proclaimed a sacred peace for the celebration of the Olympic games, for as early as the seventh century the different Greek states sent participants and spectators to the scene. First came the contestants, to carry on their training here at the spot where the contest was to be held. Embassies to the games from the different states would soon begin to arrive, while merchants in great numbers brought their wares for sale; artist and poet came to help celebrate the victors by their art; orators found opportunity to win fame in addressing the crowds; for more than 1000 years (till it was forbidden in 393 A.D.) the festival proved a splendid focus of all that was best in the common life of the Greeks.

The first day of the festival was devoted to the great sacrifice to Zeus, in whose honor the games were held, and to the necessary preliminaries. Judges (*Hellanodikai*) and contestants appeared before Zeus Horkios, the former to swear that they would act with impartial justice, the latter to swear that they had observed the rules for training during the preceding ten months, and that they would refrain from everything dishonorable in the games. The judges then made up the final list of contestants, omitting those whom they found unworthy, investigating the Hellenic descent of the applicants, and arranging the contests of youths so as to prevent any unfairness. The second day saw the running and wrestling and boxing of the youths under twenty, those only excepted

[1] A convenient presentation of the subject is Hachtmann, *Olympia und seine Festspiele*, 1899.

who had been adjudged strong enough to compete with men. On the next day the men, entirely naked and anointed with oil, entered the lists. The running would not appeal to a modern athlete, for the course was strewn with soft sand and the runners waved their arms vigorously in their efforts to cover such a course. The Olympic period was named for the victor in the single course of about 200 yards (600 Greek feet = 192.27 metres). This single course was followed by the endurance race of 24 courses, nearly three miles, and the double course. In the wrestling three throws (τριάζειν) were necessary for a victory. The celebrated Milo of Croton won this prize six times; the seventh time he was conquered by a fellow-citizen who had learned how to avoid his fatal grip. The boxers had their arms and hands wound with leather thongs, to which leaden weights were later added. The skill of the contestants lay in parrying and avoiding the blows till one acknowledged himself beaten; more than once a boxer was crippled or killed by his opponent. The last contest, the *pankration*, was the severest of all. Wrestling and boxing were combined and even throttling was permitted, a battle royal in which only the strongest and most skilful might participate.

On the fourth day came the horse races, the pentathlon, and the foot race in armor. The hippodrome is said to have provided a course up and back, just less than a mile in length. At one end of the central dividing wall was a statue of Hippodameia crowning Pelops, victor in the chariot race. On either side and at the east end sat the spectators. Each car, a low two-wheeled affair with body open behind, was confined behind a rope in its own little compartment at the west end; by a somewhat artificial device these ropes were dropped in such a way as to permit the drivers to begin the race together. The race included twelve courses; if the length of the course is correctly given, the race of about 11 miles must have been a test of endurance rather than of speed. At Delphi on one occasion no less than 41 cars took part in a single race; such scenes of confusion as Sophocles describes, car crashing into car, driver and horses in most immi-

nent danger in the *mêlée*, must often have added to the excitement.[1] The prize of victory was awarded not to the driver for his skill, but to the owner who had raised or secured such excellent horses. The races of two-horse cars, of colts, etc., need hardly be mentioned beside the main race of four-horse chariots.

The pentathlon was a peculiarly Greek contest in that it tended to develop skill in all forms of athletics. The long jump, the 200 yards dash, throwing a discus of about four pounds, throwing the spear, and wrestling, one after the other, tested the man's powers in every direction; only those who came up to a high standard in the early contests, entered the wrestling, and the victor here was victor in the series. The race of men in armor, a double course, completed the games, and in the evening those who had received the palm branch of victory were banqueted.

The prizes were publicly bestowed on the fifth and last day. Wreaths of wild olive, cut with due ceremony from the tree designated by the oracle, had been lying in the temple before the image of Zeus;[2] now the judges placed them on the brows of the victors and heralds proclaimed name and state of the victors to the applauding crowd. After the victors had sacrificed to Zeus, the embassies from the different states joined in a magnificent procession from one altar to another. The people of Elis served a banquet to the victors, a Pindar was engaged to sing their praises, they were escorted home in triumph, their crowns were dedicated in the principal temple at home, and they received substantial tokens of their countrymen's favor. At Olympia also, the victor might dedicate a statue to the god, though only to him who had won three victories was a portrait statue permitted.

Not even the war with Persia, that great struggle to vindicate Greek freedom against what claimed to be a world power, united the different states of Greece as they were united in the Panhellenic games. Men offered to the gods the exhibition of their strength and skill as an expression of the worship of all Greece,

[1] Pindar, *Pyth.* 5. 49; Sophocles, *Elec.* 698 f.

[2] Pindar, *Olym.* 3. 13 f.; Pausanias, 5. 7. 7; 5. 20. 1; cp. Lucian, *Anach.* 15.

and every state accepted this worship as the common inheritance of one people.

**9. Worship of the Individual and the Home.** — The variety of worship in the city was to some extent reflected in the home. The goddess of the home as such was Hestia (Vesta), the personified hearth flame. Her round altar wound with white fillets stood in the main room (*ἀνδρών*), for the hearth had from earliest days been the centre of home life.[1] The city also had its central hearth, where burned the fire of Hestia, symbol that the city was a larger home. Every sacrifice is said to have begun and ended with the worship of Hestia. In the home sacrifices of animals were offered to the gods of the hearth (*θεοὶ ἐφέστιοι*), including Hestia. Every day libations were twice offered to her at meals. And on all occasions which emphasized the home — departing on a journey or returning home, the reception of the new wife, birth, death, the coming of new slaves — on all such occasions the goddess of the home was worshipped.

At Athens the first shrine as one entered the house was a stone in the form of a truncated cone which stood just outside the door. This was at the same time altar and symbol of the god. Here to Apollo the Guardian men prayed in time of plague or other trouble; the home comer stopped to worship here; on receipt of good news fragrant herbs burned on this altar.[2] At the door the bridal pair stopped to receive on this altar the new fire for their home.

The patron deities of the race (*θεοὶ πάτριοι*) had their worship perhaps in a side room off the main hall. The goddess of the city, Athena, as well as the gods of the family, the deme, the tribe, the phratry, might find a place here; in fact men brought to their homes the worship of any city god in which they were interested. Small images of these gods were kept in cupboard-shrines, shrines the front of which often had the form of a temple (*ναΐσκος*), and

[1] Cornutus, *De nat. deor.* 28; Diodorus Sic. 5. 68; the material is gathered (but not critically handled) by Petersen, *Der Hausgottesdienst der alten Griechen*, 1851.

[2] Sophocles, *Elec.* 637; *Trach.* 209; Aeschylus, *Agam.* 1080 f.; Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 875.

were worshipped both at family feasts and at the time of their public worship.[1] As an altar of Zeus stood in the court of the palace in early times,[2] so there may often have been an altar of Zeus Herkeios in the open court of later houses, for he was worshipped in the home as well as publicly in the city. Probably images of marriage gods were installed in the bedroom of husband and wife.

Finally gods of property and of good fortune found their place in the home. Zeus Ktesios was worshipped here to safeguard health and wealth.[3] His presence is said to have been symbolized by a two-handled vessel; for purposes of worship the vessel, wound with wool, was filled with water, oil, and fruits of all kinds. Plutus, good fortune, Agathodaemon (success), and Hermes, god of trade, seem to have been worshipped occasionally with Zeus Ktesios.

These different shrines — that of Apollo Agyieus at the door, of Hestia in the main room (*andron*), of the gods of the family and the gods of property perhaps in side rooms, of marriage in the bridal chamber — were not necessarily all present in every house, but they stand for the normal worship of the home. The worship of each day and of recurring festivals was brought to them.[4] It remains to speak of the special worship associated with the special events of family life.

The religious ceremonies connected with birth had a double aim, to remove ceremonial uncleanness and to obtain divine favor for the new-born child. The olive wreath hung on the front door at the birth of a son or the woolen fillets at the birth of a daughter, which betokened the work of the future housewife or the honor to be won by the man, warned visitors from a house ceremonially impure. The ceremony of purification, the Amphidromia, is said by some authors to have taken place on the fifth day after birth, though it seems ordinarily to have been combined with the birth-

[1] Cp. Schol. Aeschines, 1. 10.
[2] *Iliad*, 11. 774; cp. Plato, *Politia*, 1, p. 328 C.
[3] Isaeus, 8. 16; Athenaeus, 11, p. 473 C (Anticleides).
[4] Hesiod, *Erga*, 336 f.; *Frag.* 178.

day feast on the tenth day.[1] After the mother, nurse, etc., had been purified, the women of the house laid aside their garments and ran around the hearth carrying the young child. The gifts which were brought consisted mainly of delicacies for the feast that followed; one was never missing, the special cake (*χαρίσιος*) which the slaves of the household prepared for the occasion. The sacrifice before the banquet (*τὰ γενέθλια*)[2] was offered to the gods who preside over the growth of children, for example Apollo and Artemis.[3] The feast itself was peculiar in that the women of the family were present; according to late authors delicacies of the table abounded, games like the *cottabus* were shared even by the women, and the festivities were prolonged far into the night.

The enrolment of the young child as a member of the phratry has already been mentioned. At least in the Hellenistic age it was not unusual for those who had been initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries to have their young children consecrated to the same service of Demeter (*ἀφ' ἑστίας μυηθῆναι*).[4] It was the practice at Athens to bring young girls under the protection of the maiden Artemis for the five years before they were marriageable.[5] When a young man reached maturity and at about the age of eighteen began to assume the duties of citizenship, the change in his mode of life received the sanction of religion.[6] The long hair of youth was cut and dedicated to Apollo, ordinarily at Athens, in exceptional cases at Delphi; the young men took the oath of citizenship and were registered in the official list; we read also of a drink-offering to Heracles accompanied with festivities on this occasion.

Marriage was a religious rite (*τέλος*), not because any sacramental bond united husband and wife, but because the blessing of the gods was sought for the new home.[7] Preliminary sacrifices (*τὰ*

[1] Suidas, *s.v.* *ἀμφιδρόμια*; Hesychius, *s.v.* *δρομιάφιον ἦμαρ.*

[2] Euripides, *Ion*, 653; Aristophanes, *Aves*, 494.

[3] Schoemann, *Opusc.* 2. 227.

[4] *C.I.A.* III. 809, 828 f. etc.

[5] Suidas, *s.v.* *ἄρκτος, ἀρκτεῦσαι.*

[6] Hesychius, *οἰνιστήρια.*

[7] Cp. Lasaulx, *Studien des classischen Altertums*, 261, 426 f.

προγάμια) were offered by the parents of bride and groom to the gods of marriage (θεοὶ γαμήλιοι), Zeus Teleios, Hera Teleia, Arte-

FIG. 32. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING

A bride is being led toward her new home; the central figures are Apollo and Artemis as gods of marriage.

mis, and at Athens, Athena. The bride consecrated to the gods her playthings, her maiden garment, sometimes an offering of her hair. To avert evil both bride and groom[1] took purificatory baths in water brought with special rites. The wedding feast itself at the house of the bride's father included sacrifices to the household gods with prayers for the prosperity of the new home. The wedding procession in the early evening was accompanied by musicians invoking Hymen, the god of marriage. On reaching their new home the husband and wife worshipped at its different shrines, ending with the gods of marriage in the bridal chamber; in Boeotia, according to Plutarch, the priestess of Demeter formally blessed

FIG. 33. — RELIEF IN ATHENS

An attendant is holding the head of a sick man in the presence of Asclepius.

[1] Pollux, 3. 38 and 43; Euripides, *Phoen.* 347 and schol.

the new wife in the name of the goddess who presided over the mysteries of marriage.[1]

In sickness men turned to the gods for help. The warriors of Homer all had some skill in dealing with wounds, but Machaon, son of Asclepius, was divinely gifted to treat them successfully. The physician of the gods was Paieon (the god of healing, apparently of healing charms); from him the physicians of Egypt claimed descent. In spite of the epic aversion to magic, we read of charms used to stay the dark blood of Odysseus's wounds. The plague described in the beginning of the *Iliad* was from Apollo; not "soothing herbs" nor charms, but the direct intercession of Apollo's priest was the power that checked it.[2]

Later Greek medicine was intimately connected with the worship of Asclepius. The school of Cos, of which Hippocrates is the best-known representative, was not independent of the celebrated shrine of Asclepius on that island; one of Galen's four "schools" was that of the Asclepiadae in Asia. The sick man had his choice between visiting a "drugseller" in the marketplace,[3] or calling in a man of some education who practised for money, or going directly to the shrine of healing. Although at such shrines healing virtues were ascribed to the god alone, there is no question that the priests were versed in medical lore;[4] many of the cures which patients believed were due to the touch of the divine hand can only have been due to surgical operations by the priests. The most famous shrine of healing was the temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus, with which the worship of the same god at Tricca, Cos, Pergamon, and Athens was closely related. The records at Epidaurus testify to the remarkable cures there achieved.[5] These may have been due in a measure to the healthy location, the waters, and the wise advice of priests who inherited the knowl-

[1] Athenaeus, 7, p. 309 D; Petersen, *Hausgottesdienst*, n. 145 and 160; Plutarch, *Conjug. praec.* 138 B; Preller, *Demeter and Persephone*, 353, n. 58.

[2] *Iliad*, 11. 514 f.; *Odyssey*, 4. 231; 19. 457; *Iliad*, 1. 456.

[3] Lucian, *Apologia*, 7, p. 714.

[4] Plato, *Politia*, 10, p. 599 C.

[5] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 802-804; Merriam, "Aesculapia as revealed by inscriptions," *Gaillard's Medical Journal*, 11, no. 5.

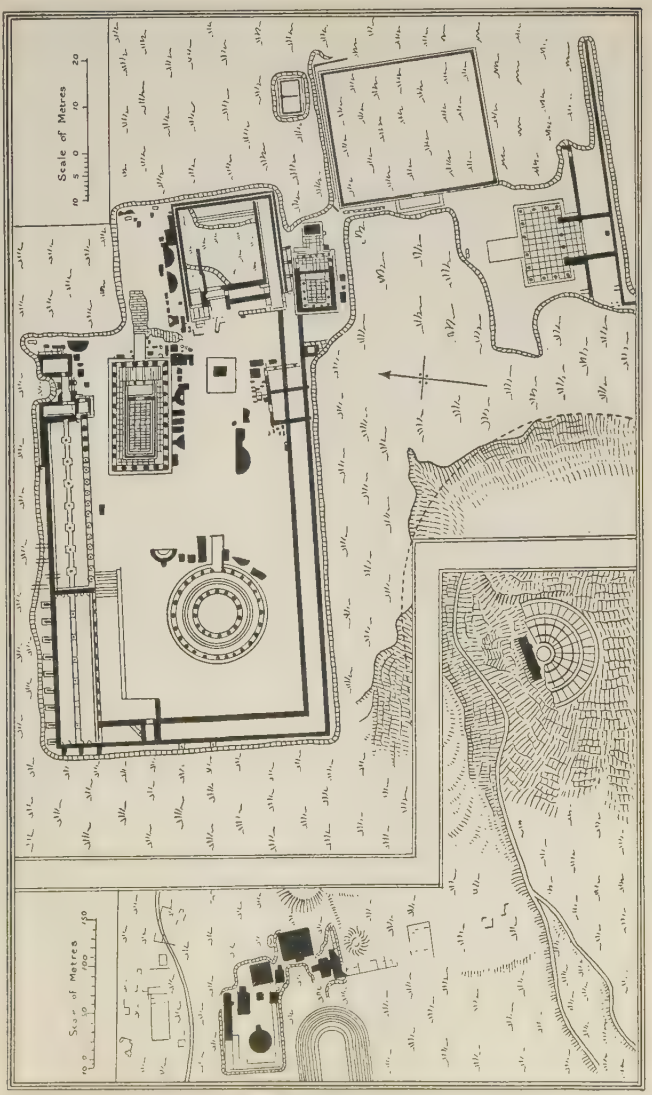


FIG. 34. — PLAN OF THE RUINS OF THE ASCLEPIUS PRECINCT AT EPIDAURUS

edge of generations. The central feature of the treatment was the *incubatio* (ἐγκοίμησις), the sleep in the shrine during which the god appeared to the patients in a dream either to heal them directly by divine touch or to give them medical advice.[1] Aristophanes gives an entertaining account of the way Plutus, god of wealth, was cured of blindness at the shrine of Asclepius in Athens.[2] The order of the attendant that all patients go to sleep, the appearance of the priest, then of the god attended by Iaso and Panaceia and the boy with a chest of drugs, the serpents that licked diseased parts — all these represent Athenian belief as to the method of healing there pursued. Votive offerings of the part cured, eyes or ears or hands or breasts, together with liberal fees testified to the gratitude of the patient.

Properly speaking the rites connected with death and burial belong with the worship of the home; but because of the light they throw on the conception of what follows death, they will be treated in Chapter IV.

Lastly we must consider the private worship, *i.e.* the worship independent of the state, in the religious associations (θίασοι, ὀργεῶνες).[3] Associations under the patronage of some god played a large part in Greek life after the fifth century; for the most part they may be grouped in two classes: associations formed for the worship of some foreign god, and clubs or societies formed for various ends, but with one of the state gods as patron. In both classes the organization was much the same; those who were elected to membership paid an initiation fee and made themselves subject to the laws of the society; officers (priest, treasurer, etc.) were elected annually; all members were on the same democratic footing, governing the society by "decrees," imposing fines or granting honors by their votes, in much the same manner as was done in the assembly of the state. It was a peculiarity of many of these societies, especially those formed for the worship of a foreign god, that women, freedmen, and slaves were admitted on the same terms as citizens.

[1] Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* i. 8. 10; Aristides, *Orat.* i. 570. [2] *Plutus*, 653 f.
[3] Foucart, *Des associations religieuses chez les Grecs*, 1873.

The clubs or societies under the patronage of a state god were of most varied character. The biographer of Sophocles states[1] that he formed a society (θίασος) of educated men who honored the Muses. The actors in the theatre had associations in many cities with Dionysus as their patron. We read of a society of sixty *bon-vivants* at Athens, whose banquets were celebrated enough to attract the attention of Philip of Macedon; Heracles was their patron deity.[2] Even the courtesans of Paros had their society with its priest and temple servants.[3] The list of such societies included benefit clubs, which loaned money without interest and paid funeral expenses, "trades-unions" of artisans in the same occupation, literary and philosophical clubs, as well as those formed for purely social ends. Just as each group in the state had its religious side in the worship of some god or hero, so each club, whatever its purpose, recognized some god in whose worship the club joined.

The distinctively religious associations consisted primarily of foreigners who united in the worship of the gods of their home cities. In the days of its prosperity thousands of foreign residents took up their abode at Athens, especially in the Peiraeus. No law forbade them from carrying on the worship of the Mother of the Gods, or the Thracian Bendis, or the Tyrian Heracles, in their own manner.[4] It was only when they wished to build a temple that the express permission of the city was needed. For example, when the people of Citium wished to build a temple to their Aphrodite, the matter was brought before the *Boule* and the Assembly, and received favorable action.[5] Occasionally one of these cults, like that of Artemis Bendis, was adopted by the Athenian state. For Athenian citizens to join associations for the worship of these strange gods was not unusual, although it was regarded as discreditable. Demosthenes's account of such private

1 *Vita Soph.* § 6.
2 Athenaeus, 14, p. 614 D; 6, p. 260 B.
3 *Ath. Mitth.* 18 (1893) 21 f.
4 Cp. Plato, *Politia*, 1, p. 327 and schol.; Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 633.
5 Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 551.

worship[1] may fairly be regarded as expressing the sentiment of the Athenians toward these crude, weird cults; and yet with all their crudeness and immoral practices, they were not without influence in suggesting to the Athenians a more personal type of religion than that which found expression in the formal worship of the state. With the decay of the city's power and the gradual neglect of its public worship, private religious associations in some cases took over the worship of the state. A recently discovered inscription describes in detail the organization of the Iobakchoi,[2] an association which carried on the Bacchus worship after the true Athenian manner in a temple built above the old state shrine of Dionysus Lenaios. The fact remains that in the best days of Greece the state and the family, rather than the private association, were the organizing forces of religion.

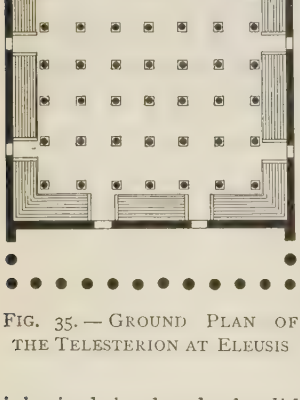

FIG. 35. — GROUND PLAN OF THE TELESTERION AT ELEUSIS

**10. The Eleusinian Mysteries.** — The cults of some foreign gods won adherents from the Greeks themselves, because they made a personal appeal; they met a need which the inherited ritual and splendid ceremony of the state cults did not even recognize; it is, then, no mere chance that so-called mysteries became a large factor in Greek religion. The public worship of the state was so bound up with the political and social conception of the state that it meant little for the individual. And when these state-ideals began to break down, when the personality of the individual in its strength and in its weakness began to be more clearly recognized, men sought some more immediate personal relation with a god. That the worship of Sabazius,[3] for example, gained a hold

[1] Demosthenes, 18. 260.

[2] *Ath. Mitth.* 19 (1894) 248; Maas, *Orpheus*, 18 f.

[3] Cp. p. 241.

among the Greeks is proof of this tendency in religion. What these private worships furnished in a form often unworthy and discreditable, might better be secured in the old and respected worship of Demeter at Eleusis. Apparently Eleusis grew up as a

FIG. 36. — VIEW OF THE RUINS AT ELEUSIS

community of Demeter worshippers governed by priests of Demeter. Only after bitter conflict with the developing power of Athens, was this agricultural priest-state brought under Athenian sway; in its religious influence the conquered state prevailed, the worship of the goddesses became the most important cult of Athens, it gradually gained adherents all over Greece, and flourished with Olympia and Delphi in Roman days. Excavations on the site of the shrine have brought striking testimony to the development of these "mysteries." Because this worship furnished the appeal of religion to the individual and the assurance of a real life after death,

while at the same time it had the respect due to an old and sacred Attic cult, its rapid growth is not difficult to explain.

The shrine of Demeter at Eleusis occupied a slope facing the bay of Salamis and not far from the water. In Roman days one entered the precinct through a larger and a smaller gateway; just inside the latter was a temple of Pluto where the rape of Persephone was said to have taken place; a little farther on was the temple of Demeter herself. The main building, the Telesterion, differed from other Greek religious houses in that it was a place of assembly large enough to accommodate the crowds of worship-

FIG. 37. — VASE WITH FIGURES IN RELIEF (St. Petersburg)

The Eleusinian officials are standing between seated gods and goddesses.

pers, not simply a home for some god. The lower story, once surrounded on all sides by some twelve steps on which the initiated might sit or stand, remains in part to-day; of the second story only the entrance platform is left. The lower hall was so

filled with supporting columns that the view of any rites celebrated there must have been seriously obstructed; the upper hall is said to have had similar rows of seats about it and in the centre a stage, open to the sky and surrounded with columns.[1]

The celebration of the mysteries was in charge of the *hierophant*, selected for life from the Eleusinian family of the Eumolpidae, who was known only by his official title after his election to the position. The name indicates that it was his function to exhibit and explain the secret symbols. The *dadouchos* (torch-carrier), the *herald*, and the *altar-priest* were chosen for life from the family of the Kerykes. These officials with their assistants had charge of the sacrifices, purifications, and other ritual; while the *archon basileus* of Athens with one or more civic commissions exercised supervision over the shrine in the name of the state.

Much confusion on this subject has been due to a misunderstanding of the word "mysteries." If there had been any large body of secret doctrine, some traces of it would certainly have reached us through the watchful enemies of the old religion. We are expressly told that Greek mysteries consisted of things done or acted, and sentences pronounced (*τὰ δρώμενα καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα*).[2] Such ritual-dramas were not foreign to other Greek cults; at Delphi, for instance, the purification of Apollo after killing the dragon was represented by the worshippers once in eight years. At Eleusis the drama was perhaps more symbolic, more secret, more sacred. For the Greek a mystery meant a ritual-drama, beheld and shared only by the initiated.

In the fifth century the mysteries included two festivals. The so-called "lesser mysteries" at Agrae early in March served as a preparation for the rites at Eleusis, in that only those who had first been initiated here were eligible candidates for the "greater mysteries." It was in March that Persephone returned from the lower world to her mother, so that it is natural for her to be the central figure in a rite at this season of the year; of the

[1] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 13, p. 159.

[2] Pausanias, 2. 37. 3 f. (at Lerna); 3. 22. 2 (to Dionysus).

festival at Agrae we know hardly more than that Persephone and Dionysus, not Demeter, were in the foreground.

The "greater mysteries" were preceded by a truce between the Greek states to permit worshippers from outside Attica to travel thither unmolested.[1] Candidates for initiation obtained a director or "confessor" (μυσταγωγός), whose duty it was to advise them as to necessary purifications, to instruct them as to the meaning of the ritual, and to serve as their guide during the whole ceremony. On the fifteenth of Boedromion (*i.e.* the beginning of September) began the fast which was rigidly observed during the daytime and prohibited some kinds of food at night. The next day formal proclamation was made by the hierophant and dadouchos in front of the Painted Porch (στοὰ ποικίλη), warning away the impure and barbarians, and inviting others to share the worship of Demeter. The day was named ἅλαδε μύσται because those who were to take part in the mysteries bathed (and cleansed the pigs they were to sacrifice) in the sea near Athens. Two days more were spent at Athens in sacrifices to Demeter and to Asclepius as well, for as Asclepius had himself been purified for initiation in the mysteries, so thereafter newcomers might have an "Epidaurian initiation" (τὰ Ἐπιδαύρια μυεῖν).[2] The ceremonies at Athens ended with the Iacchus procession to Eleusis on the nineteenth of Boedromion. All who were to share the worship at Eleusis, early in the fifth century some 30,000 in number,[3] set out along the Sacred Way bearing the image of the god Iacchus (a form of Dionysus which had been adopted into the Eleusinian worship) together with symbols brought from Eleusis (τὰ ἱερά), and chanting hymns to the god. Though the distance is barely thirteen miles, sacrifices at different shrines and other ceremonies along the way delayed

[1] References for the following account are to be found in Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen*, 204 f.

[2] It may be that this initiation might take the place of initiation in the lesser mysteries in the spring; see Mommsen, *ibid.*, p. 220.

[3] Herodotus, 8. 65.

the slowly moving multitude until it was late at night before they arrived.

During the next three days (and nights, *παννυχίδες*) the worship at Eleusis included (1) sacrifices on the different altars of the precinct, (2) the initiation of new-comers, which included sacrifices, purifications, and some instruction as to the rites they were to share now for the first time, and (3) the mysteries

FIG. 38. — MARBLE FUNERARY URN (Terme Museum, Rome)
At the right the initiate is sacrificing; in the center the purification is represented, and at the left he sees the vision of the goddesses, Demeter and Persephone.

proper. The latter consisted of two parts, the second of which was reserved for those who had shared the first stage at least once in a former year. The night of the twenty-second was spent in torch-dances and visits to the spots made sacred by the Demeter legend; the fast of the previous nine days was ended by taking a peculiar drink, the *kykeon* (*κυκεῶν*, made from barley meal, mint, and water), and symbols kept from profane view were exhibited to the mystae or handled by them. Perhaps also some sacred formulae were then for the first time imparted to the initiates.[1]

[1] Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 2. 21) gives the "confession" of the initiates in the following form: *ἐνήστευσα, ἔπιον τὸν κυκεῶνα, ἔλαβον ἐκ κίστης, ἐργευσάμενος ἀπεθέμην εἰς κάλαθον καὶ ἐκ καλάθου εἰς κίστην.* This indicates that the mystae tasted cakes contained in the mystic cista. For the symbols see Apuleius, *Apol. de magia*, c. 55.

On their second visit to Eleusis the mystae were admitted to the crowning ceremony of all, the "visions" (ἐποπτεία). Gathered in the great hall of the mysteries (τελεστήριον) they saw scenes representing Demeter's joy in the recovery of her daughter, representing the underworld where this same Persephone is queen, representing perhaps the birth of Iacchus, the establishment of the Festival at Eleusis, and the sending out of Triptolemus to distribute among men the grain of Demeter. To call these scenes a drama suggests something more pretentious than the evidence warrants; the ritual of the preceding night might better receive that name. In these "visions" symbols were sufficient to suggest scenes of the familiar story, while images of the gods showed Persephone with Hades in the lower world, the mourning Demeter, and Persephone reunited with her mother. Apparently the rites ended with this blessing by the hierophant: "Dread and reverend are the goddesses; most blessed of men on the earth he whom they truly love; speedily they are his escorts to the great home, to Plutus who grants abundance to mortal men."[1]

FIG. 39. — FRAGMENT OF A SMALL VOTIVE FIGURE (Eleusis)

Persephone stands by the seated Demeter, perhaps in the form in which the reunion of the two goddesses was exhibited to the worshippers at Eleusis.

The "Homeric hymn" to Demeter contains the cult legend

[1] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 487 f.

which serves as a commentary on the ritual. Persephone, plucking flowers with her attendant maidens, was seized by the king of the dead and borne away to his realm below. Demeter, who had heard her daughter's last cry as she disappeared beneath the surface of the earth, hurried over sea and land for nine days in search of her. Learning that Hades had carried her off, Demeter came to Eleusis in the guise of an old woman, where the daughters of the king found her sitting by the Parthenian well. She was persuaded to break her fast and come to the king's house. At length her divinity was revealed, and she established the mystic rites, but still the mourning mother did not permit the grain to sprout. The hymn closes with the account of Demeter's joy when Persephone was restored to her, and with expressions of gratitude for the gift of the grain and for the revelation of the mysteries.

The worshippers came to Eleusis veiled like Demeter, they imitated her wanderings in their torch-dances on the seashore. They too had fasted nine days, and they broke their fast with the same mystic "kykeon" which Demeter had drunk. The Parthenian well (Callichore) where she rested, the house of the king of Eleusis, the temple he had built for the goddess in the time of her grief, were the spots where they sought to realize her divine presence. The symbols they handled and the "visions" in which the mysteries culminated brought the mother and the daughter very near to the worshippers. The reunion of Persephone with her mother, the continued life of Persephone in the realm of Hades, the sending out of Triptolemus — these scenes constituted a drama of things divine. Men shared the experiences of the goddess in her sorrow, in her joy, in her blessings to men; and as they shared her experiences, they felt a mystic bond uniting them with the mother and the daughter. To be able to claim these gods as their personal protectors and friends, gods who sympathized with them in the deepest human experiences, this, rather than any new knowledge, was what men gained at Eleusis.

"We alone have the sun and its gracious light, we who have

been initiated in the mysteries and have lived a pious life toward strangers and toward our own people," sings Aristophanes's chorus in the flowery meadows of the lower world.[1] Again, in the words of Sophocles, "Thrice blessed they of men who see these mystic rites before they go to Hades's realm. These alone have life there, for others there all things are evil."[2] The universal testimony of Greek literature teaches us that the most important result of the mysteries was this clear hope of a real life after death. All Greeks believed in the continued existence of the soul, though such existence hardly deserved the name "life." The initiated at Eleusis felt for themselves the favor of Persephone, queen of the dead; if the goddess of the dead accepted their worship here, they might expect her favoring care when they came into her presence after death. Moreover they saw Hades in the "visions," and they found out for them-

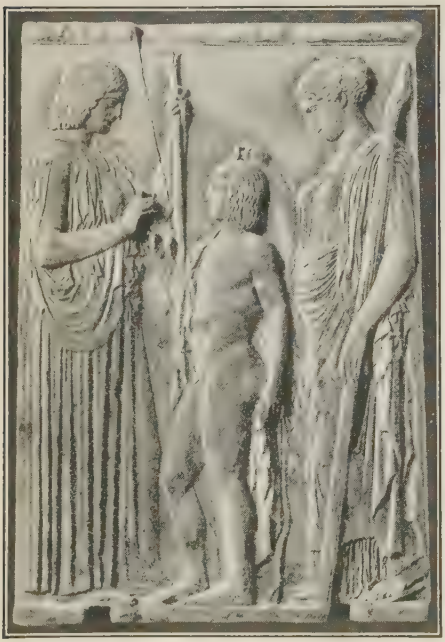

FIG. 40. — MARBLE RELIEF FROM ELEUSIS

Demeter (at the left) is giving the grain to Triptolemus, while Persephone (at the right) places a crown on his head.

[1] Aristophanes, *Ran.* 455 f.; cp. Pindar, *Frag.* 114 (102); Plato, *Phaedo*, 69 C; Aristeides, *Or. Eleus.* 259.

[2] Sophocles, *Frag.* 719.

selves that he was not the dread king of Homer but the fit consort for Demeter's daughter.[1] Nor was this hope for themselves alone. The worshippers shared the pangs of Demeter's sorrow when Hades carried off her daughter, they shared the love that demanded the return of Persephone, and they shared the joy of the goddess when that love won back its object even from death. Could the mother or husband or brother from some bereaved home have shared these experiences without feeling that his love too would sometime be satisfied again, that in the life after death he would rejoin the loved ones he had lost? Because they vivified the belief in a future life, while at the same time they met the religious needs of the individual, the Eleusinian mysteries were perhaps the most important form of worship in ancient Greece.

[1] Plutarch, *De def. orac.* 422 C.

# CHAPTER III

## THE GREEK GODS

**1. The Gods in their Relation to the World.** — According to the Hebrew conception the material world, plants and animals, man himself, were the direct creation of God; the Greeks explained the world as the result of a process of growth or development, in which the higher and more complex forms of existence grew out of simpler forms. The gods instead of creating the world were a part of the world, in the same sense that men were a part of it. Men originally sprang from the earth, or developed from lower animals, or — some said — were the one thing that the gods did make.[1] The gods for the most part traced their descent back through Cronus and Rhea to that same primeval Heaven and Earth (Ouranos and Gaia) from which came the physical world. The three generations of the gods, marking successively the rule of force, the rule of cunning, and the rule of reason, and the crises which separated them, belong to that half-philosophical explanation of the origin of things which was offered by Greek mythology; Greek religion started with the world we know, a world in which gods and men are the active forces.

That the forces at work in the world were conceived by the Greeks as personal beings, after the type of the human will, has already been explained;[2] indeed, it is difficult for scientist or child or primitive man wholly to avoid this view. Both in wor-

[1] [Pindar], *Frag.* 84, Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graec.* 3. 711; cp. *Odyssey*, 19. 163; Hesiod, *Theog.* 570 f.; Aristophanes, *Aves*, 686. The whole subject is treated in Preller-Robert, *Griech. Myth.* 1. 29–105.

[2] Cp. Introduction, p. 30.

ship and in myth the Greek freely created for himself a personal universe; his world was made up of men and gods, many gods, each of them (like a man) working from some one point or within some definite sphere. What man can use, what helps or hinders him, the source of good and the source of evil, find expression in these Greek gods. Such a belief enables a man to handle evil like a human enemy, to seek blessing as from human benefactors; all that affects him is part of the intelligent society to which he himself belongs. The fire, as useful as it is treacherous, is the province of Hephaestus; all the dangers and changeableness of the sea are reflected in Poseidon and his followers; an Artemis is there to guide the hunter, a Demeter to make the grain sprout, a Hermes or Apollo to watch over the herds; Athena is the spirit of wisdom, Hermes of shrewdness, Ares of tumultuous war; even the spirits of vengeance, the Erinyes, may be turned into powers of blessing. In a word the Greek gods are in the world, not above the world, superior beings who embody in personal form all the forces that enter into human life.

Such is the truth, which becomes obscured when the attempt is made to identify the gods of worship with objects or processes in nature. Helios, Selene, and Eos belonged to the poetry of myth rather than to religion. But the Zeus of Olympia and Dodona was not the sky, even though one hears the expression, "Zeus rains." Apollo at Delphi was not the sun, nor did the Artemis of Delos wear a crescent to suggest that she was the moon. Poseidon was not a personification of the sea nor Dionysus of the wine. In each instance the god was that superhuman person whose power was ever made manifest in the fact or process of the natural world.

The epic was the first attempt to treat these gods as rulers of the whole known world.[1] The account of them is interesting in that it lays down the lines of later belief for worship almost as much as for myth. Because the epic statement furnished the background for the worshipper's thought, it is all important for our attempt to understand the Greek view of the rule of the gods.

[1] *Mythology of Greece and Rome*, Part I, Chap. i, "The Gods in Homer."

The world was governed by a royal family in Olympus, in which King Zeus had far greater power than any other individual though his throne was endangered when the other gods combined against him. The court of Zeus was like that of Menelaus or Alcinous; at the banquet of these divine princes Athena obtained permission for Odysseus to return home, and Hera vainly taunted Zeus for planning reverses to the Greeks.[1] Once in the poems Zeus summoned a popular assembly of all the divine spirits, like the assembly at which Agamemnon tried to test the spirit of his soldiers.[2] It is Zeus who dispenses good and evil to men, Zeus to whom the epic heroes commonly pray. Poseidon, Hera, even Athena, try without lasting success to circumvent his purposes. So long as the other gods keep within their own sphere, Zeus does not interfere with them. Nature is subject to the gods; Athena sends a fair wind, Poseidon a tempest; the sun is hastened in his course at the wish of the gods. The events of history are guided by Zeus; Achilles's anger and the story of the *Iliad* are part of his plan, and Troy falls as he had purposed. Whatever the individual is or does may be referred to the gods — the beauty of Paris, the might of Ajax, the breaking of the truce by Pandarus, the bad bargain Glaucus made in exchanging his armor.

As an actor in the poem, however, Zeus cannot always follow his personal desires; when Sarpedon is hard pressed by Patroclus, Zeus questions whether to let his friend die or snatch him away to his home in Lycia, till Hera reminds him that it is Sarpedon's lot to die at this time.[3] "Neither men nor gods can ward it off, when the baneful lot of death overtakes a man."[4] Is this lot or portion a fate higher than Zeus? or is it part of the "ancient decrees of the gods" which Zeus is bound to obey?[5] The question is never asked in such form by the poet, who recognizes no power higher than that of Zeus. That which befalls man, his good or evil fortune, his duty, the limitations of his life — these consti-

[1] *Odyssey*, 5. 1–42; *Iliad*, 1. 559.
[2] *Iliad*, 20. 1 f.
[3] *Iliad*, 16. 431 f.
[4] *Odyssey*, 3. 236.
[5] For the literature see Buchholtz, *Die homerischen Realien*, 3, 1. 47 f.

tute his divinely appointed lot, for man does not control his own destiny. The lot included an "ought" which he might disobey (he might act ὑπὲρ μόρον, ὑπὲρ αἶσαν), as well as the inevitable to which he must bow. With all the other human characteristics transferred to the gods, this belief in a "lot" governing man's life was also transferred to them. The gods also were sometimes spoken of as subject to the same kind of destiny; if Zeus saved Sarpedon he would be acting ὑπὲρ μόρον, contrary to the "ought" which he felt binding on himself. We are not to infer that there was any definite conception of a fate to which the gods were subject; the language which produces this impression is due to that epic tendency which makes its gods so human.

The epic picture of the gods as a council of world-rulers with Zeus at their head determines the lines of later thought. All-powerful gods control events according to a perfect plan, says the pious Xenophon. Success or failure in war is referred directly to the gods; the gods preserve the Athenians from the evil results of their poor political administration; the basis of laws and morality is assigned to the gods. The good or bad fortune of individuals, their wisdom, their righteousness, and their sin are part of the divine rule. The crops are cared for by the gods, for the gods determine the weather. In general Homer's phrase for success, "with divine favor" (σὺν θεῷ), and the contrary (ἄνευ θεῶν) continue to be used, especially in poetry. The extreme position on the one hand is that men are merely tools of the gods; on the other hand we read that the gods hurry men on in the course they themselves have chosen, or again, that men succeed in doing some things because the gods are negligent. It is the normal belief that gods and men work together in all the events of human history; naturally the victorious in war emphasize the human side, the conquered refer to the defeat as divinely sent.[1]

The guiding power in history is vaguely called "the gods" or "the divine" (τὸ θεῖον).[2] The phrase "divine government" is

[1] Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 152 f.

[2] Rohde, *Die Religion der Griechen*, 10 f.

hardly appropriate, for the thought of a definite plan worked out in the world, or of any real goal toward which history was tending, was quite absent from popular belief. The power man recognized outside himself was called "the gods," or sometimes "god"; each man and each city looked for help to certain gods; it was left for philosophy to ask what the gods were making of the world. At the same time there was a strange lack of definiteness as to the relation of the gods to each other in the government of the world. The practical side of the matter amounted to this, that if a man prayed to the right god he might hope to get what he wanted. It is therefore no isolated case when Xenophon asked of the oracle to what god he should look if he wished to prosper on the expedition with Cyrus.[1] As in worship one god was supreme at one festival, another at another, and there was no priesthood to make an absolute hierarchy, so in religious belief men were content to say that the "divine" governed the world, without asking how it was that many gods maintained one government.

**2. The Nature of the Gods as Individuals.** — If the worshipper ever asked himself what sort of a being the god was, his answer to this question would again have been determined by the epic, so true is it that the epic picture of the gods formed the background for all later thought. The Homeric account of the nature of the gods as individuals may be very briefly stated as follows:[2] While the Greek gods were always spirits akin to man, it remained for the epic, as it were, to clothe them with flesh and blood. The epic preserves a clear line of demarcation between the lesser gods and the greatest men in that the gods possess faculties far less limited than men, the gods are free from the difficulties and distresses of human life, the gods have not to fear death. Though Hephaestus is used to mean "fire," and Ares to mean "war," the usage is purely poetic metonymy; neither Ares nor Hephaestus nor any of the other gods in the poems really represent physical phenomena. Everything is in human moulds. The gods have their homes on Olympus, where they live and eat and sleep, like men;

[1] Xenophon, *Anab.* 3. 1. 6.

[2] *Mythology of Greece and Rome* 37 f.

but their beauty, the rapidity of their movement, the power of their voices, their size, bear no comparison to man's. Most of the gods move from place to place and even descend to the battle ground before Troy in order to carry out their purposes; only Zeus rules from Ida, watching the course of events and controlling gods and men by his messages. The gods are not omniscient; Zeus himself stops to plan, sometimes his attention is relaxed, and it is possible to deceive him. Yet the gods can see much farther than man in space and in time; they are far wiser than man, and human wisdom comes from them. It is in their feelings that they are most like men. The hatred of Poseidon for Odysseus, the quick anger of Zeus with Athena and with Hera, the boasts and threats and taunts of Zeus, Hera's pity for the Greeks, her quarrelsome or sulky attitude toward Zeus, the sensitiveness of Poseidon, the fondness of the gods for banquets, the amours of Zeus with goddesses and with mortal women — these are the qualities which mark the gods as essentially human in their nature. Only in poems which grew up as did the Greek epic, only in lays sung to amuse the princes and the people, could gods be treated with such frank license.[1] The process was aided by the fact that the Apollo or Poseidon of the epic was not exactly the Apollo or Poseidon worshipped by any one audience to which the bard sang. The result, this legacy of gods universally recognized and most human in their nature, not only determined the character of other Greek myths; it was also a force directly and indirectly modifying the god of each local shrine in the thought of his worshippers.

If now the reader will change his point of view from that of the epic audience to that of the worshipper, the inherent differences

[1] It is easy to account for the unreligious, undignified, even unmoral character of these gods, when one remembers the circumstances under which the poems grew up. An after-dinner audience demanded amusement from the bard, nor was it in any mood to criticise religious conceptions. Demodocus, for example (*Odyssey*, 8. 266 f.), handled his theme to meet the wishes of his audience; other bards no doubt did the same; and the gods of Homer are the result of this convivial atmosphere, only tempered by the Greek sense of beauty.

between the two in their conception of what a god is will prove quite as striking as the similarities. The differences may be found in the practices by which men sought to learn the will of the gods,[1] though they are less noticeable than in other forms of sacred rite. In the epic, revelation by theophanies or portents or prophets gives an idea not at variance with the epic doctrine of the gods; for in thus guiding men's actions the gods are but carrying out their plans as rulers of the world. That theophanies and divine guidance come primarily to the individual in whom the god has a personal interest, as Athena is interested in Diomedes and in Odysseus, may be regarded as part of the economy of the poems; still the kindly interest of the gods in their worshippers was included in the heritage which later religious belief received from the epic. The deceitfulness of signs and dreams was a part of human experience, not forgotten in the epic, but in the epic gods forgetfulness or deceit are no peculiar blemish. In later times, on the contrary, the doctrine of signs, prophets, and oracles assumes absolute knowledge on the part of the god, and it leaves no place for careless oversight by the god. The personal element in signs is strikingly absent; it is not clear in every instance what god is supposed to give the sign, nor whether the pious man may lay any special claim to such guidance. The spirit of Apollo which overmastered the priestess on the tripod or enlightened the gifted seer implies, it is true, a god who could immediately touch the human mind with inspiring power; the thunderbolt of Zeus comes from the god who rules in the heavens; on the other hand, the ordinary divination from sacrifices is a peculiarly impersonal, mechanical method of determining whether the worship is acceptable or not. The fact that the gods are supposed to guide human action and are not supposed to show their own nature in what we have called revelation, is the reason why we get no more light from this source as to what men thought the gods to be.

In worship proper, *i.e.* in the ritual of different shrines where men sought the blessing of the gods, two different forces were at

[1] Cp. Chap. i, *supra*.

work to determine men's thought of the gods. Here the contrast between the epic point of view and the point of view natural to the worship at these shrines was very marked, although the differences were more or less blunted in the Athens of the fifth century B.C. In the first place, as was pointed out in the Introduction (p. 22 f.), worship was carried on at countless particular shrines, at each of which a peculiar phase of one god — to the exclusion of all other gods for the time being — was approached with sacred rites. At Athens, for instance, we know of some twelve centres of Artemis worship, seven centres of Aphrodite worship, perhaps twelve of Athena worship.[1] In each cult of Artemis she has a different epithet, and the origin of each cult is different; in some instances the Artemis of one cult is extremely like that of a second, or again the goddess may appear in such different forms as Lysizonos (childbirth), Agrotera (hunting), and Boulaia (wise counsel). Nothing could better illustrate the particularism of worship than this series of Artemis cults. How goddesses with such different functions became fused into one cannot be explained in detail. The process began many hundreds of years before Homer; the rise and fall of cities, tribes, and nations played a part in it; perhaps one of the last forces tending in this direction was the epic. The fact remains that worship dealt with gods distinct and local, while all the forces of civilization and of literature were at work to make connections between them. The unity of the god found expression in the general name Artemis; the phase connected with the particular shrine was marked by the added epithet name, *e.g.* Agrotera or Mounychia; such were the two poles between which the worshipper's thought of the god's nature must have played.

So far as the rites of worship are concerned the discussion in the preceding chapter has shown, in the first place, that ordinarily the element of mysticism was not prominent. The religion of Dionysus distinctly presupposes the idea of a soul akin to the divine in its nature, which may become merged in the god or

1 Preller-Robert, *Griech. Myth.* Index II, *s.v.* Athen.

possessed by the god as the result of worship. Imitative rites in the service of other gods produced a sympathy between the god and his worshippers, which was by no means free from mysticism. On the other hand, the enlightenment by which Apollo enabled his prophets to see the future was rather a gift from outside than "inspiration" in the strict sense of the term. In the state worship at Athens mysticism was reduced to a minimum; in other words, the gods were conceived as definite beings, whose relations to man were as personal as the relations of one man to another.

Further, it is clear that there was no worship of evil beings. When evil came from the gods, it was because they were angry, doubtless justly angry. When it did not come from the gods, it might be referred to evil spirits, but these spirits were to be banished, not to be worshipped. In later Greek practice such rites were not yet extinct; they have, however, so little of religion about them, they are so definitely magic and not worship, that they hardly require our consideration. Ordinarily evil is to be attributed to an angry god. The ritual for dealing with such a situation — the rites of purification, propitiatory sacrifice, etc.[1] — has special interest because it was not much subject to change under epic influence. The nature of these gods is essentially capricious. They have special blessings to bestow, in particular the blessing of rich crops, but if their favor is forfeited the loss and suffering to be expected are equally great. At times this fickle nature was attributed to one or another of the Olympian gods, but rarely or never to the patron deity of the city. The gods whose anger was specially feared were not more holy than the Olympian rulers, nor less accessible to man; in fact they stood in closer touch with the vicissitudes of human life. The list includes gods of agriculture, gods of the winds and the sea, and gods like the Eumenides or the local heroes, who have some kinship with the souls of the dead. Such gods shared no festal banquet with their worshippers; they received animal sacrifice either because they were fond of blood (the dead longed for this principle of life) or

[1] See Chap. ii, p. 105 f.

because they liked the gift; then the animal was wholly consumed. Belief in gods of this type was as persistent as the suffering or calamity which their worship might alleviate.

The normal type of state worship with its processions and prayer hymns, its votive gifts and festal sacrifices,[1] was associated with the belief in gods not unlike human rulers, who were bound to their worshippers by the ties of social relationship. The grounds on which the worshipper based his hope that his prayer would be answered were mentioned in the discussion of prayer: former worship of the god and former favors received from the god, both of which are tokens of the personal relation existing between the god and the worshipper; the greatness of man's need, and the god's pity; the justice of the request. In Homer there are many references to the reciprocal relations between the god and the worshipper. The same note is found later in the community worship, that is, the gods enter into personal relations with a state or community; they find pleasure in the homage of their worshippers and gladly grant these men their favor and protection. It is true that Homer has much to say of the gods' fondness for banquets and their delight in the fragrance of sacrifice. But while this pleasure of appetite on the part of the gods was never entirely forgotten by the worshipper, it would seem that the desire for man's homage was what made worship most acceptable. The pleasure of the gods in worship was thus like the keenest pleasure of the human ruler, the pleasure in having his power fully recognized and honored.

The personal relation implied in worship determines the character of every religion, and thereby the character of its gods. The fear of angry or capricious gods is almost wholly omitted from the epic, and finds a relatively small place in the later worship of the state. The oriental attitude of abject servitude is as absent from Greek religion as from Greek society. The Greek sacrifice with the communion meal keeps, though somewhat vaguely, the idea of gods who cement social bonds of friendship by feasting

[1] See Chap. ii, §§ 5–6; p. 90 f.

with their worshippers. On such gods the family or the state may depend to care for them, so long as they keep up the worship in due form. These gods are not too far off, or too holy, or too selfish to watch over the community which worships them. They are not far enough off or holy enough to make religion so potent a factor as it might be in Greek life. In a word, the ordinary worship of the state presupposes gods to have the power and the wish to prosper the state because they are gratified by its homage, gods who stand for human ideals that are high but by no means absolute.

The later tendency was strong toward the epic conception of the gods as divine rulers with power to grant particular blessings. When this conception was emphasized and defined by a great temple statue, like the gold and ivory statue of Zeus at Olympia, its hold on religious belief was assured. The Greek gods lost all that was vague in their nature. They lent themselves to the purposes of art and poetry, because even in worship they were beings as clear-cut and definite as the men who paid them homage.

**3. Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, Artemis.** — For practical purposes it is convenient to treat the Olympian gods in three groups: (1) the five greater gods, (2) the gods associated with some phase of nature, and (3) the gods who stand for human emotions and activities.[1] The five gods treated in the present section are so varied in their functions and at the same time so important that they may best be treated together as the greater Olympian gods.

(*a*) *Zeus.* The important seats of Zeus worship, Olympia excepted, were on mountain tops, as though men would get as near as they could to the sky which was the home of Zeus. The mariner prayed to the god of the weather for a prosperous voyage; the thunderbolt was his sign to deter or to encourage; when

[1] Preller-Robert, *Griech. Mythologie*, discusses the gods of worship as well as the gods of myth; references to the Greek and Latin sources are given quite fully in the notes of that book so that it is unnecessary to repeat them here. See also the chapters on worship in Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, and the references there given. A list of the more important festivals at Athens is given in Appendix II.

Zeus sent rain, the Athenian assembly adjourned; the god of the sky was one of the special gods of agriculture. One of the most interesting cults of Zeus was on Mt. Lycaeus; in this shrine of the god of light it was believed that nothing cast a shadow, nor could any man enter the presence of the god and live. When the crops were parched, the priests of Zeus stirred a sacred spring on the mountain top with an oak bough till a mist arose, the mist spread into a cloud, and from the cloud fell the needed rain. On the acropolis of Athens, Zeus Polieus was worshipped with cakes and wineless libations; in the summer rites of purification were performed that he might send rain. Zeus Maimaktes was worshipped in the early winter, and Zeus Meilichios at the Diasia in the early spring to protect the fields from dangerous storms. The festival of the Diasia was peculiar in that individuals brought only burnt offerings to appease the god of storms; he who could not afford an animal brought a cake in the form of a pig or a sheep. The legend of the birth of Zeus in Crete was based on the worship there by which the life of vegetation was evoked in the spring. His mother Rhea was "mother-earth"; his father was no doubt the stormy heavens; the din made by the Couretes to drown the cries of the infant god was suggested by the orgiastic worship of the priests. The many myths of Zeus's amours had historic basis in the fact that the heaven god was worshipped with one wife in one place, with another in another place; these gods became one Zeus with many wives. As the "father of men and gods," Zeus became the god of the family and of all social institutions. The stranger and the suppliant were under his protection, for there was no god greater or more universal to whom they could appeal. Just because he was so universal, his special cults were often less important than those of other divinities.

FIG. 41. — COIN OF ELIS (Hadrian)

The Zeus of Pheidias.

(*b*) *Hera* is the wife and queen among the gods. She, too, was worshipped on mountain tops and the phenomena of the heavens were sometimes referred to her. Men worshipped her, *e.g.* at the Argive Heraeum and in Elis, with games of war, a side of her nature which found expression in the myth that she was the mother of Ares. As goddess of marriage she was worshipped by women with imitative rites. At Argos once a year her image was decked as a bride with wreaths and garlands, the bridal bed was woven of osier twigs, and the whole ceremony of marriage performed. At Athens the bride's parents sacrificed to Hera Teleia for blessing on their daughter's marriage. The island of Samos was the most important centre of the worship of Hera.

FIG. 42. — HERA LUDOVISI
(Terme Museum, Rome)

(*c*) *Athena.* As might be expected from the position she occupies in the *Iliad*, Athena was worshipped all through northern Greece as the goddess of war. The most widespread cult was that of Athena Itonia, which centred in Thessaly. At Athens this aspect of the goddess appears not only in the worship of Athena Itonia, but in the characteristic Athenian cult of Athena Nike whose worship formed a part of the Panathenaea. The war-dance (pyrrich) at the Panathenaea indicated that Athena Polias, goddess of the city, was also a goddess of war. Why Athena was "Triton-born" (water-born) and was worshipped in many parts of Greece as the goddess of rivers and springs, it is not easy to explain. Possibly the local worship of a Larisaia, a Nedousia, and other river goddesses was merged with the worship

of the daughter of Zeus, because the most important local goddess was felt to be identical with the most important goddess of the Greeks generally. The goddess born from the brain of Zeus was worshipped with Hephaestus as the patron of the handicrafts: under the name Athena Ergane she granted women skill in weaving and embroidery; the art of healing also belonged to Athena as Hygieia and Paionia. The olive was her best gift to the Athenian people and other forms of agriculture awaited her blessing; her servants gave the signal for sowing the grain by ritual ploughings at the foot of the Acropolis. At the Panathenaic festival (cp. p. 114) she appeared as the patron of Athens, of its glory in war, its technical skill in manufacture, and its political wisdom; for in the Athena of the city, Athena Polias, all these different aspects of her being were united.

FIG. 43. — BRONZE STATUETTE OF "ATHENA PROMACHOS" (Boston)

FIG. 44. — COIN OF CROTON

Apollo is represented in the act of shooting the Python; the Delphic tripod stands in front of the omphalos in the centre.

(*d*) *Apollo* was worshipped at Athens mainly as the protector of the crops. At the Thargelia in May the first fruits were offered to him, musical contests were held in his honor, and the city was purified with special rites in order that the ripening corn might not suffer from his anger. The Sminthian Apollo in Asia Minor (*Iliad*, 1. 39) kept the mice from the grain, Apollo Parnopios kept off the locusts. In the Peloponnesus and more especially in Thessaly shepherds looked to him to protect and prosper their flocks. Apollo, the perfect embodiment of

youth, was worshipped by boys as they arrived at maturity; gymnasiums, like the Lykeion (Lyceum) at Athens, were situated in his sacred precincts. The best-known form of Apollo was the god of Delphi, patron of prophecy, music, and the healing art. In the Pythian games alone athletic contests were second to contests in singing and playing and rhythmic dancing.

(*e*) *Artemis* is in many ways the feminine counterpart of her brother Apollo. Maidens offered to her before marriage their girlhood dress and toys, for she was the ideal of chaste maidenhood. Mothers also looked to her for protection in childbirth. In strange contrast with the goddess who was sister of Apollo, Artemis was worshipped both in Greece and in Asia Minor as the embodiment of the untamed life of the forest. To Artemis alone of the gods wild beasts were sometimes sacrificed instead of cows or sheep. Hunters sought her blessing, for the beasts of the chase were thought to be under her protection and she herself claimed preëminence as a huntress. Oftentimes Hecate, goddess of magic arts, was identified with Artemis. Images of Hecate, now carrying a torch, now in triple form, were set up by gates and doors. Her special worship was carried on at night with secret ritual; food was set out for her at the cross roads, often to be eaten by passing beggars. This night worship may have made it easy to identify Artemis with the moon as Apollo was at length identified with the sun.

**4. Gods associated with the Earth, the Waters, and the Heavens.** —(*a*) Though the *earth* (Ge or Gaia) was the mother of the whole family of the gods in myth, she was rarely worshipped. At Athens men sacrificed to her as the abode of the dead, at Delphi and Olympia the earth was honored because gases from it were a source of inspiration. But generally the mother-goddess had grown away from this direct connection with the earth; it was all but forgotten in the case of the grain goddess Demeter, and received little emphasis in the case of Rhea and of Cybele. But though the connection with the earth is not clear for the other wives of the heaven-god, no one can doubt that the mother of

vegetation, Rhea in Crete, Cybele in Asia Minor, was originally the earth-mother. The worship of Cybele has many points of interest. In the fertile plains of Asia Minor she took the place of Demeter as goddess of the grain; the great goddess of the country, she was worshipped as the protecting spirit of cities; but her proper home was in the mountain forests. All the wildness of the region was introduced into her orgiastic worship. On Mount Dindymon was the holy shrine of the mother who brought forth vegetable life in the spring and mourned its loss in the fall; here too was the grave of Attis, beloved of Cybele, whose death was one type of the tragedy of winter. Firs wreathed with violets were the cult symbols of Attis. The worship consisted in sharing the gladness of spring and love, the gloom of the dying life of the world. Corybantes and "Metagyrtes" stirred the worshippers with flute and cymbals and wild cries to a high pitch of frenzy, till they felt themselves one with the great mother-earth in her experiences of joy and of sorrow.[1]

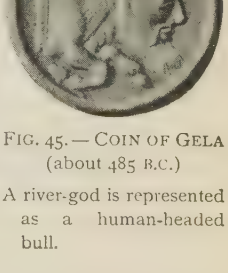

FIG. 45. — COIN OF GELA (about 485 B.C.)

A river-god is represented as a human-headed bull.

(*b*) The spirits of *rivers* and *springs* found no place among the Olympian gods except in the rare instances where they were identified with one of these gods. The importance of the rivers in local worship was often considerable. The Asopus in Boeotia, the Achelous in Aetolia, the Spercheius in Thessaly,[2] the Alpheius in Elis were gods of fertility in the soil, of growth in man and animals, and in some instances of healing. The spirits of springs were nymphs blessing the region with fertility. Water from certain springs was important for purification; before marriage both bride and groom bathed in water fetched from a sacred spring, in Athens the spring Callirhoe, for by such purification the favor of the gods was secured and children might be expected. The account of the

[1] Cp. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, and Osiris.*

[2] Cp. *Iliad*, 16. 174; 23. 142.

shrine of the nymphs at Ithaca (*Odyssey*, 13. 349 f.) illustrates the simple worship of this beautiful embodiment of nature life.

(*c*) *Poseidon* alone among the sea gods was one of the Olympian council. Glaucus (the shimmering sea) was worshipped on the straits of Euboea, Palaemon at Corinth, Ino-Leucothea at Megara, but their cults were limited to a few spots. Poseidon, on the other hand, was the brother of Zeus himself. In his ancient shrines on the south coast of the Corinthian gulf, as in the epic story, he was the god of shipping, of fishing, and of trade by sea. At Mycale in Asia Minor his worship was the political centre of a group of Ionian cities; the great games at the Isthmus, that centre of trade and shipping, were celebrated at his shrine; the island of Calauria was the centre of worship for a considerable group of cities, including Athens. His favorite sacrifice was a bull, often a black bull, for his nature was violent and easily stirred to anger. Poseidon was also the "father of waters" away from the sea; especially in the Peloponnesus he was honored as the god of fertility of the soil. The shepherds prayed to him to bless their flocks, but the rearing of horses was his special care. At Mantinea in Arcadia, at Athens, particularly in Thessaly, he was worshipped as the patron of horse-raising, of skill in horsemanship, and of cavalry as used in war.

FIG. 46. — COIN OF SELINUS (about 460 B.C.)

The river-god Selinus is pouring a libation; before the altar stands a cock; behind the god is a selinon leaf above the statue of a bull.

(*d*) The heavenly bodies were not generally worshipped in Greece. On the island of Rhodes, however, the sun, *Helios*, was the chief deity; horses were sacrificed to him by being plunged into the sea, and the Halieia was a splendid festival in his honor. At Corinth and at various points in the Peloponnesus he was an important god who watched over flocks. The maintenance of holy flocks and herds tended by priests was a part of his wor-

ship. The moon determined the seasons of worship but was not herself worshipped. Nor were the stars worshipped. The dog-days, however, marked by the early rising of Sirius, who was known as the dog of the hunter Orion (*Iliad*, 22. 29), were the season of peculiar rites. To ward off the evil effects of the dog-day heat sacrifices were offered to Aristaeus, a god of shepherds, wine culture, and bee culture in northern Greece. The Linus song (*Iliad*, 18. 570 f.) is a ritual of this same season, which seems to have been introduced into Greece through Asia Minor from a Semitic source (αἴλινον = ai lenu, "woe to us"). At Argos Linus was worshipped as the son of Apollo and the nymph Psamathe ("sand-spring"); according to the story this child was exposed and grew up with the lambs of the flock, till the dogs tore him in pieces. At his tomb in Argos each summer women and children performed a ritual of mourning and supplication. The festival was called Arneides ("Lamb-days") and on one day (Kynophontis, "dog-killing") all dogs found on the streets were put to death. The purpose of this worship was to ward off the evil effects of the dog-days from men and flocks. Similar rites of mourning combined with the use of the Linus song were to be found in other parts of Greece.

(*e*) The *winds*, source of heat or of rain, source of storms on the sea, were not generally worshipped, on the ground that they were subject to the greater gods. Sometimes magic rites (ἐπῳδαί) were used to ward off their evil effects. Boreas, the wild north wind, had an altar at Athens and in a few other cities. Asses were offered to the winds at Tarentum, horses on Mt. Taygetus, libations without wine at Athens; even human sacrifice is said to have been performed in their worship. These were propitiatory sacrifices to check the violence of the winds. It was Athena, or Poseidon, or Zeus who sent fair winds to bring the sailor on his way.

**5. Gods of Human Activities and Emotions.** — The gods discussed in this section include those who preside over agriculture and flocks, gods of trade and manufacture, the goddess of love, and the god of war.

(*a*) *Demeter* was no doubt originally the "mother-earth," but in worship she has become primarily a goddess of the grain. In the rich valleys of the Peloponnese, in Crete and Asia Minor, in Sicily, her worship was widespread, although Eleusis in Attica claimed to be the centre from which agriculture and the cult of Demeter were given to the world. A sacred ploughing at Eleusis corresponded to the ploughing below the Athenian acropolis as a signal for the farmer to begin the preparation of his ground. Demeter Chloe ("green"), who was worshipped on the slope of the Acropolis, cared for the fresh green of the sprouting grain; Demeter Erisybe kept off the mildew, Demeter Olympia guarded it from drought; harvest festivals (*e.g.* the Thalysia of Cos, the Haloia of Eleusis) were celebrated in honor of the goddess; Demeter Himalis was worshipped by millers, and Demeter Megalomazos by bakers. The most widespread festival of Demeter was the Thesmophoria, in the first instance a festival of seed-sowing, the ritual of which was intended to secure good crops to farmers and children to the family. It was Demeter Thesmophoros, the goddess of sowing, who taught men the principles of family life and agricultural life. At Athens only married women of citizen descent and blameless life could share the festival, and that after a nine days' fast. On the next to the last day of the festival, called the "Fast-day," living pigs were left to die in underground chambers; the half-decayed flesh was later removed, and superstitious people mingled fragments of it with the seed they sowed. On the last day, Kalligeneia ("Fair offspring"), dances and contests were followed by a rich banquet which the wealthier women furnished.

In the Eleusinian worship (see p. 128 f.), Demeter and Persephone were goddesses of souls as well as goddesses of the grain. At the time when seed was sown Persephone departed to her husband in the lower world; when the grain sprouted she returned to her mother. At Megara and at many points in the Peloponnese (for example at Hermione) the mother and daughter were primarily goddesses of souls, worshipped at points where some cavern seemed to furnish an entrance to the lower world.

(*b*) *Dionysus.* — In Attica and on many of the fertile Aegean islands Dionysus was worshipped as the god of wine. In December at the "country Dionysia" of Attica he was worshipped with dance and song and rustic jollity; the emblem of fertility was carried about in processions; and dolls or masks were hung on the trees. This last custom was explained by the myth of Erigone, who hung herself in grief for her father[1] at the time when wine

FIG. 47. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (St. Petersburg)
Apollo and Dionysus stand with clasped hands above the Delphic omphalus; on either side are Bacchantes and Satyrs.

was first introduced into the country. An inflated wine skin covered with grease played a large part in the amusements at this festival. The Lenaea were celebrated at the time of the winter solstice with sacrifices and later with dramatic representations. The city Dionysia came in March. An old cult image had been brought from Eleutherae to Athens; each year this was taken to the Academy the night before the feast and then escorted to its temple in the city the next day with a great procession. Sacrifices, choral dances, and finally the representation of new tragedies and comedies, made this the most magnificent festival of the

[1] See p. 243, *infra*, Part II, Chap. iii.

Athenian calendar. Meantime the Anthesteria (flower festival) had been celebrated in February. On the first day, called "Cask-opening" (πιθοιγία) the new wine was opened and shared by masters and slaves together. At the public banquet on the next day (named "Pitchers," χόες) there was a contest in drinking wine with a prize for the man who first emptied his pitcher. Every one wore crowns of flowers which afterwards were dedicated in the temple of Dionysus. At this time Persephone was supposed to return from the underworld and her husband (Hades) with the return of vegetation. Further, the wife of the king archon was formally married to the image of Dionysus, as a token of the bond uniting this god to the Attic state, while the people dressed as followers of Dionysus indulged in wild gayety. On the third day ("Pots," χύτραι) pots filled with cooked fruits were brought to Hermes, conductor of souls. Meantime the temples of other gods than Dionysus had been closed, for the souls of the dead were free to walk the earth on these "unclean" days. The feast of "all-souls" ended with the cry "Away, ye souls, the Anthesteria is past;" then men might safely take up their ordinary tasks once more. In this festival Dionysus was the god of souls, the wine god who showed men that souls were of the same substance as the god by filling them with Bacchic inspiration; and he was

FIG. 48. — ATHENIAN WHITE LEKYTHOS (Jena)

Hermes with his wand stands before a *pithos* from which issue small winged "souls."

the god of returning vegetation as well as the god of the wine. The orgiastic worship of the god of vegetable life was found in many parts of Greece. It centered at Delphi, where the summer belonged to Apollo, the winter to Dionysus. At Delphi men told of the "sufferings" of this god of plant life; they showed his grave in the shrine of Apollo; after the winter solstice women from all about, even from Athens, clothed themselves as Maenads and braved the dangers of snow-clad Parnassus to waken the divine babe with their wild cries. Though this worship was probably introduced into Greece at no early date, it became from one standpoint the very centre of Greek religion.

(*c*) *Hermes*, even more than Apollo, was the god of flocks and herds, himself a shepherd in dress and manners. His worship was especially prominent in the land of his birth, Arcadia, and in Thrace. In Athens the fourth of every month was observed as his birthday. It was the god of flocks who once saved Tanagra from pestilence by carrying a ram all around the walls and then sacrificing it, a rite of purification which was imitated in worship each year. In general it was Hermes who prospered the flocks and cared for the young. The cairns erected by wandering shepherds came to represent their god. Often the landmark was a square pillar, in later days surmounted by a head or mask of Hermes, a "herm" as it was called from the name of the god. The god who protected roads was worshipped as the protector of heralds and the chief of their guilds; he was also the god of trade and gain, worshipped as Hermes Agoraios in the market-place; and he was the guide of souls on their last journey, worshipped (*e.g.* at Argos) on the third day after death, honored at Eleusis, the god by whose aid souls were evoked. Like Apollo, Hermes was a god of perfect youth, honored as Hermes Agonios in gymnasiums. The Hermaia at Athens consisted mainly of athletic contests by youths and boys.

*Pan*, the son of Hermes, was another Arcadian god of shepherds and goatherds. With his goat's legs and beard he was the very spirit of that wild life of the goatherd and his goats. He too loved rocky peaks and wooded dells, springs and nymphs of

springs, the dances and music of the goatherd. Caves, mountain tops, and high oaks were sacred to Pan; music and choral dance belonged to his worship; torch festivals also were held in his honor. After the "panic" terror, by which Pan helped the Athenians win the battles at Marathon and Salamis, he was worshipped in a grotto near the entrance to the Acropolis. Such caves and grottoes were commonly the centres of his rustic worship.

FIG. 49. — HANDLE OF A GREEK BRONZE MIRROR (Fourth Century B.C., Boston)

Aphrodite with an Eros on each shoulder.

(*d*) *Aphrodite.* — The ready sympathy with which the Greeks adopted the worship of the gods of animal and vegetable life has been seen in the case of Rhea-Cybele and Dionysus. Aphrodite was perhaps of Semitic origin, the oriental goddess of creative life in plants and animals. From Cyprus and Asia Minor her worship was carried to the Aegean islands and northern Greece; from Cythera it worked northward through the Peloponnese to Corinth. At Paphos in Cyprus (ἱεροκηπία) as at Athens her fane was surrounded by gardens which were filled with springing life when she was worshipped.[1] One form of her worship at Athens consisted in planting seeds in potsherds with a little earth; the plants sprouted quickly, quickly faded, and then were thrown into water. These so-called "gardens of Adonis" symbolized the beautiful youth who was born each spring for Aphrodite to love, and was killed a little later by the summer's heat.[2] Theocritus (*Idyl*, 15)

[1] Strabo, 14, p. 683; Pausanias, 1. 19. 2.

[2] Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 6. 7. 3; Hesychius, *s.v.* Ἀδώνιδος κῆποι.

describes a scene from the mourning for Adonis at Alexandria, another of those festivals in which men were united with a goddess by sharing her deepest emotions of love and grief. At Corinth as in Semitic countries licentious rites were prominent in Aphrodite's worship. More commonly in Greece she was honored as the goddess of human love, of marriage and the family. The apple placed in the hand of her statues symbolized human love; Pheidias represented her with her foot on a tortoise, which symbolized the retired life of the woman in the home. Aphrodite Hera was the goddess of marriage at Sparta; in Attica Aphrodite Kolias presided over childbirth; to Aphrodite women prayed for all feminine charms. In Paphos no blood stained her altars and at Athens no wine was mixed in her libations. Greek shipping entirely ceased in winter to begin again in the spring. So sailors worshipped Aphrodite the goddess of spring as the power which quieted the winter storms. In this aspect she was often known as Aphrodite Aineias, and her temples stood at many points where later legend made the hero Aeneas stop on his way to Italy. Finally, Aphrodite was worshipped with Ares at Thebes and Athens and Argos. An Aphrodite Areia in armor was also to be found at Corinth and at many points in the Peloponnese.

(*e*) *Ares.* — As Aphrodite became essentially the goddess of love, so Ares was the god of war, embodying in his nature all the wild forces of the battlefield. Thrace was the home of the god and the centre of his worship was among its wild tribes. At Athens the court for cases of murder, the Areopagus, originally met on the rocky "Mars' hill" before the entrance to the Acropolis. The temple of Ares here was said to be the outgrowth of the worship established by the Amazons when they besieged the Acropolis. In the Peloponnese the cult of Ares was established at many points; at Sparta young dogs were offered to him, and cases of human sacrifice were reported; in Elis Ares Hippios, god of horses, was honored as father of the cruel Oenomaus who slew his competitors in the chariot race. The patron god of the state, however, was worshipped more often than Ares to secure success in war.

(*f*) *Gods of Fire.* — In the Homeric pantheon the lame *Hephaestus* was the god of fire and the smith's art, with his home on the island of Lemnos. This volcanic island remained an important centre of the worship of Hephaestus and Dionysus. Each year all the fires on the island were extinguished, the country was purified, and fire was brought in a sacred vessel from Delos in

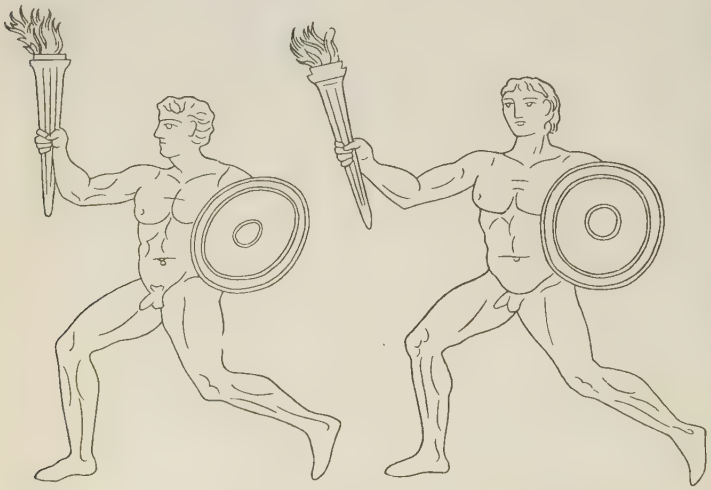

FIG. 50. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING

Contestants in the torch race.

commemoration of the fact that fire was a gift of the gods to men.[1] Hephaestus was closely associated with Athena at Athens, the patron of the smith's art with the patron of woman's handicraft. In October the Chalkeia was celebrated in honor of both gods; it was primarily a festival of workers in metal, while at the same time the women appointed to make the new garment for Athena Polias began their work with appropriate ceremonies. At the Apatouria Hephaestus was honored as a god of the hearth fire and the home by means of torch-light processions. The Hephaesteia

[1] Philostratus, *Heroica*, 19. 14.

was also an important festival at Athens. On this occasion as at the Panathenaea and the Prometheia the Athenians instituted a torch-race from the Academy to the Ceramicus.[1] Torches fitted with shields to protect the flame were carried by youths or relays of youths, with a prize to the first one who brought in his torch burning. In the west Hephaestus was honored in the region of Aetna and of Vesuvius. To one of the islands near Puteoli, which was sacred to him, it was customary for men to bring a piece of iron and a gold coin; the next day a sword, presumably forged by the god, was ready for them.[2]

*Prometheus* was honored in Attica with Hephaestus as the giver of fire and of that civilization which fire made possible. The best-known feature of his worship was the torch race from his temple in the Academy to the city.

*Hestia*, the hearth fire, was honored as the goddess of the home and of family life.[3] Other cults might be absent, but in every household she was honored. The community also and the state had a common hearth as the symbol of unity. Officials of the state conducted the worship of Hestia in the Prytaneum at Athens, and in this home of the state public banquets were given to distinguished citizens and strangers. All Arcadia had its common hearth and common worship of the goddess of the hearth at Tegea. Finally, at Olympia and at Delphi all the Greeks united in her worship. At Delphi the holy fire of Hestia was the source of fire for many other shrines; all who came to consult the oracle worshipped at her hearth; no doubt others beside Orestes came there for purification; while those who sang in honor of the Pythian god paid special tribute to this Hestia. Because she was so closely connected with the hearth fire Hestia was not a subject for myth, but was prominent in worship.

(*g*) *Gods of Healing.* — The power to heal sickness was one of

[1] Herodotus, 8. 98; Harpocratium (from Polemon), *s.v.* λαμπάς.

[2] Callimachus, Hymn to Artemis, 46, and schol.; Apollonius Rhod. 4. 761, and schol.

[3] Cp. *supra*, p. 120.

the functions of Apollo, but more commonly it was exercised by *Asclepius*, Apollo's son. The Asclepiads of Tricca in Thessaly were mentioned in the epic. From this early shrine his worship was brought to Epidaurus, and from there to Pergamon in the east, to Rome and Cyrene in the west. Of the splendor of Epidaurus traces still remain in the beautiful ruins of the theatre, and in the foundation walls of temples, spring houses, and buildings for the care of the sick. The worship which was introduced into Athens by the poet Sophocles was developed somewhat rapidly because Asclepius was taken under the protection of the Eleusinian goddesses and of Dionysus. On the first day of the greater Dionysia sacrifices were offered to Asclepius and there was a lyric contest in his honor. And on one of the earlier days of the Eleusinian mysteries there were large sacrifices of cattle to the god of Epidaurus; as Asclepius had been initiated into the mysteries at this time, so other newcomers might be initiated; furthermore the presence of the healing god was then specially manifest to the sick who slept at his shrine (in the παννυχίς). The manner in which his healing powers were exercised has been described under the section on private worship (p. 124).

The other important god of healing was Eileithyia, who presided over childbirth. On the island of Delos, where Leto gave birth to Apollo and Artemis, Eileithyia had a special cult. In her shrine at Athens there was an image which had been brought from Delos, with two others that had come from Crete. The Genetyllides, attendants of Aphrodite in her temple at Cape Colias, also granted help to Athenian women in the time of their need. At Tegea, Sparta, Argos, etc., were important shrines of Eileithyia.

**6. Heroes.** — The heroes are a class of beings peculiar to Greek religion, greater than men, less than gods, worshipped by the people who dwelt near their shrines as the source of special blessings. The warriors of the *Iliad*, the princes of the *Odyssey*, are called "heroes"; and in one locality or another many of these heroes were worshipped in later time. From the Greek standpoint a

hero is the soul of some powerful man which gains added power after his death. The people found adequate proof that such was the case in the relics of a hero's lifetime; they could see the sceptre of Agamemnon at Chaeroneia,[1] the skin of the Calydonian boar whose ravages had summoned so many heroes to the hunt,[2] the spring of Glauce at Corinth,[3] the rock at Troezen[4] under which Theseus had found the sword and shield destined for his use, the house of Cadmus at Thebes or of Menelaus at Sparta. These men had sprung directly or indirectly from the union of a god and a mortal woman or nymph; their tombs became centres of worship, for the divine part of their nature did not die; from time to time they appeared as superhuman warriors or hunters to bless their worshippers. The myths of these heroes helped to make them real and to extend their worship.

The facts of hero worship are fairly plain to the student of Greek religion, but the problem of their interpretation is more, far more, complicated than it appeared to the Greeks themselves. The worship of the hero was carried on at what purported to be his grave, and his help was sought in the belief that his powerful spirit resided not in Hades but in and about the grave. The grave was separated from the profane land about it by an enclosure, a building (*heroon*) was often erected over it or a grove planted near it, while the snakes that chanced to find a home near by were regarded as appearances of the hero himself. In trenches by the grave or on a low mound (ἐσχάρα) near by, sacrifices were offered, ordinarily whole burnt offerings (ἐναγίσματα) such as were offered to gods of souls and of agriculture, though at some hero shrines men shared a communion meal with the hero as with a god.[5] This worship involved the belief that the hero was a being powerful to send unusual good or unusual evil within the somewhat limited sphere of his activity. He cruelly avenged neglect or sacrilege; if properly worshipped he would help defend the land

[1] Pausanias, 9. 40. 11.
[2] Pausanias, 8. 47. 2.
[3] Pausanias, 2. 3. 6.
[4] Pausanias, 2. 32. 7.
[5] Cp. *supra*, p. 108; and *e.g.* Pausanias, 2. 10. 1; 10. 4. 10.

against enemies, stop pestilence, heal the sick, foretell the future. To obtain such aid the bones of Orestes were brought to Sparta, the bones of Theseus to Athens, and shrines were erected in their honor.[1] Indeed, it was a regular practice for the Delphic oracle to introduce the worship of a local hero as the remedy for any form of pestilence, with the result that this type of worship was widely extended during the fifth century B.C.

The worship of men as heroes after their death is not attested before the fifth century B.C., and it was not common till considerably later. There is no reason to believe that the older cults of heroes were the outgrowth of funeral rites for the kings and princes whose names they bore. The most important fact to be considered in the examination of hero worship is that many of the heroes were connected with some god, and often their names occurred as local epithets of this god. Erechtheus and Poseidon Erechtheus, Agamemnon and Zeus Agamemnon, Amphiaraus and Zeus Amphiaraus, Iphigeneia and Artemis Iphigeneia, Callisto and Artemis Callisto, Chthonia and Demeter Chthonia, cannot be regarded as in each case absolutely distinct beings. Amphiaraus *is* Zeus Amphiaraus, *i.e.* he is a local deity often identified with Zeus; Erechtheus is a local Poseidon, Iphigeneia and Callisto and Dictynna and Britomartis are local forms of Artemis, Harmonia is a Theban Aphrodite, — the list might be extended to include more than half the names of cult-heroes which have come down to us. Students are not agreed as to the exact nature of the process by which the heroes came to be worshipped as such. In some instances we seem to be dealing with the worship of an ancient god, for example a Dictynna in Crete, who was later identified with Artemis in myth while she continued to be worshipped in the original locality as a "hero." In other instances we seem to find the same process as in the worship of Nike, namely first the worship of the god with an epithet added to the name (Athena Nike), then the treatment of the epithet as the name for an independent local deity. In either case a hero was a local

[1] Pausanias, 3. 3. 7; 3. 11. 10.

deity, often associated with some greater god, who was worshipped in much the same manner as the dead and the gods of the dead.

Founders of colonies commonly were buried in the marketplace, we are told, and worshipped as local heroes. It is a well-attested fact that Miltiades began to be worshipped in the Chersonese, and Brasidas in Amphipolis, immediately after their death. Gelo was worshipped as the second founder of Syracuse, Aeschylus as the benefactor of Gela, soon after death. The worship of the heroes of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Plataea was simply the continuation of funeral rites in their honor. The followers of Plato, Theophrastus, and other philosophers paid tribute to their masters, which came to be a sort of hero worship. The wills of Epicteta (Thera) and of Epicurus (Athens) illustrate how a man might provide for semi-divine honors to be paid to him after his death.[1] In some parts of Greece the dead were regularly spoken of as heroes, but in Athens this seems never to have been the case. It was this worship of the dead as heroes which paved the way for the deification of kings in the Alexandrian age, and eventually led to the practice of worshipping the Roman emperors even during their lifetime.

[1] *I. G. Ins.* 3. 330; Diog. Laer. 10. 18.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE SOUL AND THE FUTURE LIFE

**1. The Epic Conception of the Soul.** — The contrast already noted between the poetic gods of Homer and the gods of actual worship, is repeated in the contrast between the epic conception of the future life and the conception which underlies the practices of burial and soul worship. If we pass over the twenty-third book of the *Iliad* and the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, with a few scattered allusions, the view of death and the soul in the epic is consistent. It is my purpose to state this distinctly epic view before examining the traces of another conception and attempting to explain the presence of two all but contradictory views.[1]

With all its emphasis on the joyful side of life, a pessimistic vein runs through the epic, and this vein controls the allusions to death. Death is hateful, evil, man's worst enemy. For Achilles the gates of Hades are the symbol of what is most to be dreaded; the soul of Achilles in Hades esteems a menial position on earth better than that of a king in the world below.[2]

Whenever the word "soul" (ψυχή) is used in the epic, a reference to death is intended; in other words the "soul" has no place in the psychology of the living man, it is simply what goes to Hades when the man dies. It is said to fly out of the mouth, the wound, or the limbs.[3] On the one hand the soul is described as an εἴδωλον, an image of the living man; on the other hand it

[1] "The Conception of the Future Life in Homer." *Amer. Jour. Theol.* 1 (1897) 741 f.

[2] *Odyssey*, 12. 341; *Iliad*, 3. 173; 3. 454; 9. 159.

[3] *Iliad*, 22. 467; 14. 518; 16. 856.

is a shadow, a form without substance, for all the substance of the body has been burned at the funeral.[1] With the exception of the passages to be discussed below, there is no clear and definite statement as to what this shadowy image, the soul, really is. In one instance it is poetically described as mourning its departure from manhood and youthful vigor.[2] The definite tendency of the poems, however, is to regard souls as unconscious. Real life with its activities and joys is ended; "to go to Hades" means "to die" and nothing more. Speculation as to the future finds no place in these poems of the market-place and the banquet hall.

**2. Traces of an Early Worship of the Dead.** — In later Greek belief the soul is often regarded as divinely immortal; almost universally the souls of the dead are worshipped on the ground that they have superhuman power to bless and to curse. So general in early religion is the dread of souls and the effort to appease their wrath that something of the kind is to be expected in early Greece; and in fact the one thing we certainly know about religion in the Mycenaean age (see p. 199) is that the dead were buried with scrupulous care. Erwin Rohde has demonstrated that certain passages in the epic can only be understood as surviving rudiments of the earlier practice.[3] The soul of Patroclus, which appears in a dream to his friend Achilles, is the image of the dead man with none of his substantial being. At the same time it differs from the normal epic idea of the soul in that it not only has consciousness, but also a knowledge of the future. It chides Achilles for his neglect, prophesies the death of Achilles, and prescribes the manner of the burial of Patroclus's body. Such appearance in dreams is only possible, we are given to understand, because the body of Patroclus is not yet burned; the fact remains that here the soul has a reality and consciousness and superhuman knowledge. Just before death the soul may foretell the future through the man's dying lips, as in the case of Patroclus and of Hector.[4] The power of souls to appear

[1] *Iliad*, 23. 66; *Odyssey*, 10. 495.
[2] *Iliad*, 16. 857; 22. 362.
[3] *Psyche*, 14 f.
[4] *Iliad*, 16. 851; 22. 358.

in dreams and their power to foretell the future, are survivals of the earlier conception of the soul as a semi-divine being. It is due to this same belief that the bodies of the dead were burned with careful ritual. If the soul be divine, it may be worshipped to secure favor and blessing for its surviving relatives. Primitive man also devised a very different method of dealing with the situation; fearing the supernatural power of the soul for evil, he burned the body of the dead in order to cut off any point of contact with this world which it might have. The epic treats the souls of the dead as unreal images, but souls must be carefully laid to rest else man may expect harm from them. The special rites at the burial of Patroclus (*Iliad*, 23) — the sacrifice of cattle and of dogs that used to eat beneath the dead man's table, in particular the sacrifice of twelve Trojan youths to be burned with the dead man's body, finally the funeral games in his honor — are not creations of the poetic imagination. They survive from a time when men offered sacrifice and other worship to souls, and when souls were thought to take some real satisfaction in the offerings.

In books eleven and twenty-four of the *Odyssey* there is an interesting blending of the old and the new, the survival of early belief and the epic freedom in making the soul an unsubstantial shadow. The rites of incantation for evoking the soul of Teiresias must be derived from actual practice at some point where souls were evoked (as Saul caused the soul of Samuel to be evoked[1]) to ascertain the future. The trench a cubit each way, the libation first of honey mixture, then of wine and of water, to all the dead, the vow to sacrifice in Ithaca a barren cow to all the dead and a black ram to Teiresias, the blood flowing from the throats of the sheep into the trench, and the gathering troops of souls, — these are no mere poetic imagery. In the account of the interview of Odysseus with Teiresias and with his mother, which follows these rites, the souls are mere shades. They come and go in troops, they fly and cheep like bats; they differ from the souls described

[1] 1 Samuel 28. 7 f.

elsewhere in the poems only in their longing for blood, *i.e.* for the life principle, and in that they regain consciousness for a brief period by drinking blood. Teiresias alone retains his consciousness and his prophetic powers in Hades, apparently because the very power of prophecy removes him from the ranks of men one

FIG. 51. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Krater, Paris)
Odysseus consulting the soul of Teiresias.

step nearer to the gods. The poet who wrote the account of Odysseus's interview with the heroes of the Trojan war[1] went a step further and endowed the souls of these heroes with some degree of consciousness and some knowledge of the future. From them Odysseus learned of what was going on in Ithaca and of what would happen there later, though they did not know the fate

[1] *Odyssey*, XI. 385–567.

of their own sons. Ajax in Hades was still under the mastery of that hatred for Achilles which had caused his death; Agamemnon was attended by those with whom he used to fight; Achilles was still a king, little pleasure though it brought him. It is much this same view which appears again in the earlier part of book twenty-four.

The explanation of the epic treatment of the future life is to be found partly in the migrations from the mainland of Greece to Ionia, partly in the social influences under which the epic poems developed. The early Greeks, so far as we know, ordinarily buried their dead and continued to bring food and other gifts to their tombs, though cremation was also practised. The colonists in Ionia (where the epic probably took its present form) found these ties weakened by migration, and cremation proved more convenient than burial. By this means the souls of the dead were "sent to Hades," and the worship at the tomb had no longer any reason for existence. The practices in Ionia, however, did not prevent the inhabitants of Greece proper from keeping up the old beliefs and the old worship. If we may assume that the pantheon of Olympian divinities was taking more definite shape in this age and winning more general recognition, the influence of these universal gods would in itself have some tendency to put all local worships, including the worship of the dead, somewhat into the background. Thus the very development of religion would temporarily tend to make the belief in a future life less real. And the epic in its songs of battle and of travel consistently turned from worship to story; the gloom of death was simply the background to the account of active life; the gods became actors in the story, souls became mere shades. In the same ratio as the gods were greater and happier than men, so life in this world was more joyful and more real than life in Hades. It is only as an incident of distant travel that we get the picture of the realm of Hades, a realm almost as shadowy and unreal as the shades who dwelt there.

The significance of this view of the future life is not limited to

Ionia, where it seems to have arisen. The Greek lyric with its roots also in Ionia continues the epic strain in regard to death. Attic poets of tragedy and comedy varied between the epic view and thoughts derived from actual worship of the dead. It is characteristic of the Athenian point of view when Plato makes Socrates assume that death is either a dreamless sleep (the epic view), or the introduction of the soul to a higher form of life (the view based on worship of the dead).[1] One great service of the epic for Greek religion was that it tended to free the minds of all who came under its influence from superstitious fear. So the banishment of souls from the tomb to a distant shadowy realm tended to bring to an end all fear of ghosts. And with the belief in universal gods, the way was opened for the introduction of

FIG. 52. — ATHENIAN WHITE LEKYTHOS (Vienna)

Prothesis scene; mourners about the couch on which rests the body of the dead.

Dionysus worship and the development of the mysteries of Demeter, in which the belief in a real future life found religious basis.[2]

**3. Funeral Rites.** — Funeral rites at Athens included the "lying in state" in the home (*πρόθεσις*), the funeral procession (*ἐκφορά*), the burial or cremation of the body, and the banquet in honor of the dead. The eyes and mouth of the dead were closed, the face was

[1] *Apol.*, 40 C–E.

[2] *Supra*, p. 136.

covered, and the body washed or anointed with perfumes, offices performed by the nearest female relatives rather than by hired attendants.[1] On a high couch spread with sprays of pungent herbs was laid the body, clad in white garments and wreathed with flowers, while about it stood funeral vases (λήκυθοι) manufactured specially to hold the perfumes on such occasions.[2] By ancient custom the feet were toward the door where the corpse was to be borne out.[3] The day during which the body was thus exposed was spent in lamentation. Members of the family, the slaves, near relatives and friends, and often some hired singers conducted the ritual of mourning; until it was prohibited by law, the women were accustomed to tear their garments, to beat their breasts, and to scratch their faces till the blood ran down.[4] The lamentation often took the form of a responsive chant to flute music, with a refrain in which all joined.[5] In any case there seems to have been an element of worship in the mourning. The Athenians, who often carried money in the mouth, placed in the mouth of the dead a two-obol piece for Charon, the ferryman of the Styx; sometimes the dead was also provided with a honey-cake for Cerberus.[6] Meantime a vessel containing water fetched from a neighboring house had been placed at the door, that those who left the house might purify themselves by sprinkling.[7]

Early the next morning came the funeral procession. The couch on which the body had lain served as the bier; before it went the male relatives, behind near female relatives, with hair cut short and dressed in black (or gray).[8] The law of Ceos prescribed silence; at Athens hired singers might accompany the procession with their sad lays. In many places libations were

[1] *Iliad*, 18. 350; Plato, *Phaedo*, 115 A; Lucian, *De luctu*, 11, p. 927.

[2] Aristophanes, *Eccles.* 1030 f.

[3] *Iliad*, 19. 212.

[4] Plutarch, *Solon*, 12, p. 84; 21, p. 90; cp. Plato, *Leg.* 7, p. 800 E; Lucian, *De luctu*, 12, p. 927.

[5] *Iliad*, 18. 315; 24. 719 f.

[6] Lucian, *De luctu*, 10, p. 926; Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im neuen*, 118; cp. Aristophanes, *Lys.* 601 and schol.; *Nub.* 507.

[7] Euripides, *Alc.* 98 f.; Pollux, 8. 65.

[8] Euripides, *Alc.* 427; Demosthenes, 43. 62.

FIG. 53. — STREET OF TOMBS AT ATHENS (Cerameicus)

poured out and whole burnt offerings sacrificed at the grave; in Ceos, for instance, the law limited the amount of wine to three measures and of oil to one, while it enjoined the sacrifice of an animal "after the custom of the fathers."[1] At Athens the sacrifice of cattle was expressly forbidden in a law attributed to Solon.[2] For those killed in battle the Athenians made a public funeral, at which a Pericles or a Demosthenes spoke in praise of the patriotic virtues of the dead.[3] Athletic games in honor of the dead man were held in early times, but they dropped out of use until at a late period they were occasionally revived.

It was a fundamental principle of Greek religion that the body must not be neglected. The unburied body is said to be a cause of anger to the underworld gods, for its burial is their due, a source of impurity bringing a curse on the region, a blot to spoil any worship of the gods.[4] In war there were truces for the burial of the dead, and the victors buried their enemies as well as their friends. The traveller who found a corpse unburied must place at least two handfuls of earth on it as a ceremonial burial.[5] The tragic significance of Sophocles's Antigone lies in the fact that the human king forbids what divine law absolutely requires, namely, the burial of Antigone's brother. This deep-rooted requirement dates back to the fear of ghosts in the early stages of Greek religion.

Both burial in the earth and cremation seem to have been practised from early times.[6] Burial was the simpler and more natural, cremation more imposing after a battle, more convenient when it was proposed to carry home the bones of one who died in a foreign land. The souls of those who were buried were thought to dwell in or about the tomb where offerings could be brought to them. That the tombs were placed near the gates or occasionally inside the city, and again that they were often formed

[1] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*[2], 877. 8 f.
[2] Plutarch, *Solon*, 21, p. 90.
[3] Thucydides, 2. 34.
[4] *Iliad*, 22. 358; *Odyssey*, 11. 72.
[5] Sophocles, *Ant.* 255, and schol.; Pausanias, 1. 32. 5.
[6] See Hermann-Blümner, *Lehrbuch der griechischen Antiquitäten*, 4. 373, for the literature; cp. *Ath. Mitth.* 18 (1893) 104 f.

like the front of a temple (aedicula), suggest the same range of ideas. Cremation, on the other hand, cut off souls from this world more or less completely and encouraged the idea of a realm of Hades from which none could return. The two conceptions were so blended, however, that no difference between souls of the buried and souls of the cremated was ordinarily recog-

FIG. 54. — TERRA COTTA FIGURINES FROM TOMBS AT TANAGRA (Boston)

nized. In places like Athens, where both were practised, it is natural that the difference in the outcome should be obliterated.

In either case, objects used by the dead man were placed beside the corpse. Jewelry, toilet articles, armor, pottery, and vessels of metal were placed in graves of the Mycenaean period, as though the dead man would still need them as during his lifetime ; only much of the jewelry was of gold leaf, for it was to be used by shades.[1] The same principle held good later, but pottery predominated. At Athens the lekythoi manufactured for use at the funeral are found in the tombs in large numbers. From early

[1] Hermann-Blümner, *Ibid.*, 4. 379 f.; cp. *Jahr. Inst.* 7 (1892) A. A. 20; *Ath. Mitth.* 18 (1893) 155 f.

times figures of divine beings were placed in the grave, as though to bring the soul of the dead under the protection of these gods. The beautiful Tanagra figurines were a survival of this interesting practice.

After the body had been buried or burned and a last "farewell" had been uttered, the mourners returned to the house for a memorial banquet in honor of the deceased (περίδειπνον). Both the persons and the house were first purified, and wreaths, discarded since the death had occurred, were resumed for this occasion. Women relatives as well as men were present at this banquet. The purpose of it was to recall and praise the merits of the deceased; for this occasion the principle *de mortuis nil nisi bene* was enforced by law. The soul of the dead was thought to be present as the host at this last banquet in his honor.[1]

**4. The Worship of Souls.** Though many of the funeral customs probably originated in a worship of souls, it is not always easy to prove the point. There is no question that the grave monument originally marked a sacred spot where worship was carried on. Plants and trees were placed about tombs as about temples to please the divinity there present.[2] From the standpoint of the Olympian gods death was a source of impurity; on this ground graves were ordinarily outside the city gates, the dying were carried away from the shrines of Asclepius, and Delos was purified by removing all graves that it might be an island sacred to Apollo.[3] But for the family the tombs of its dead were important shrines. There are some indications that in early days the Greeks buried their dead within the house, as in many Dorian cities they continued to bury them inside the city walls; then the cult of ancestors would be the central element in the worship of the family.[4] In Athens members of the family brought food to the tomb on the third day and the ninth day after the funeral,[5] a custom still

[1] Cicero, *de leg.* 2. 25/63. [2] Eustathius on *Odyssey*, 11. 538.
[3] Pausanias, 2. 27. 6; Herodotus, 1. 64; Thucydides, 3. 104.
[4] Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 27, p. 56; Pausanias, 1. 43. 3.; Polybius, 8. 30.
[5] Aristophanes, *Lys.* 612, and schol.; Isaeus, 8. 39; Aeschines, 3. 225.

observed on some of the Greek islands. The mourning seems to have continued for thirty days, when it was ended with an offering or memorial meal.[1] At Argos this offering was in honor of Hermes, Conductor of souls; in Sparta a similar offering at the end of the mourning was made to Demeter; perhaps the god of souls was worshipped with the thought that after the mourning the soul went to Hades and returned to the tomb only on occasions of worship. The birthday of the dead was one such occasion when worship was offered at the tomb (γενέσια), as though the life after death was a continuation of the life which began with the birthday.[2] At a festival in early autumn (the city Genesia or birthday celebration), and on the thirtieth of every month (at the νεκύσια) the Athenians brought offerings to the tombs of their respective families.[3] Finally, at the Anthesteria, a festival of Dionysus already described (p. 158), the souls of the dead were free to revisit the upper world. The temples of the gods were closed, pitch on the doorposts kept the souls from entering private houses, business was suspended, while libations were offered to the dead and pots of cooked fruits were brought to Hermes, Conductor of souls.

The worship at the grave was of two kinds (1) sacrifices and libations such as were offered to heroes and to gods of the underworld, and (2) tokens of honor and affection. The sacrifice of animals at the tomb was not a necessary part of soul worship, though in many places the sacrifice of a sheep was customary.[4] A black animal was chosen, its blood allowed to flow into a trench by the grave, and the carcass cut in pieces and burned (ἐναγίζεσθαι).[5] Apparently, it was simply the blood which the soul of the dead man wanted.[6] On the ninth day after burial cooked food, spe-

[1] Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 27, p. 56; *Quaest. graec.* 24, p. 296 E; Pollux 1. 66, Bekker, *Anec. Graec.* 268. 19.

[2] Petersen, *Geburtstagsfeier*, 301 f.

[3] Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen*, 172; Rohde, *Psyche*, 215 f.

[4] Cp. *Ath. Mitth.* 18 (1893) 151, 155, etc.

[5] Apollonius Rhod. 1. 587, and schol.

[6] Pindar, *Olym.* 1. 94; Euripides, *Hec.* 536; Plutarch, *Arist.* 21, p. 332.

cially prepared for the occasion, was placed on the grave.[1] When Lucian speaks of banquets, burned at the grave with libations for the dead, he may be referring to this practice.[2] The commonest offering was the libation (called χοή, not σπονδή).[3] The libations, consisting of honey mixed with water, of unmixed wine, and of olive oil, were poured into a trench dug beside the grave. The honey mixture was perhaps an old drink, in use before the general introduction of wine. Oil was brought to the dead not to drink, but probably that he might not lack what the living man regularly used after gymnastic exercises to anoint his body. So in some places baths of water were set in large basins by the tomb for the use of souls.[4] All these forms of worship assume that the soul desired food, drink, water for bathing, etc., just as the living man needed them.[5] If they were provided at the grave, the soul was graciously inclined toward the dead man's kindred and descendants.[6] It is suggested that in some way the continued existence and power of the soul depended on such occasional offerings.

On most of the small funeral vases (lekythoi) found in Attic tombs are represented scenes at the grave.[7] No animal sacrifice is depicted, but not infrequently men are pouring libations to the dead, or bringing to the tomb flat baskets containing cakes and fruits, or offering phials of perfume and oil. These phials (alabastra) are often set on the steps of the tomb or tied to its shaft. In the same way a sword, a helmet, a mirror, a fan, are brought to the tomb, as for the use of the dead. The seated man playing a harp is in some instances probably one of the family making music for the soul, as he had made music to gratify the

[1] Cp. Plautus, *Pseud.* 3. 2. 6 (795); *Aul.* 2. 4. 45 (324).

[2] Lucian, *De luctu*, 19, p. 931.

[3] *Iliad*, 23. 170 and 218; Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 15 f.; Sophocles, *Elec.* 434 f.; Euripides, *Orest.* 113 f.; *Iph. Taur.* 633; Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 877. 8.

[4] *Jahr. Inst.* 13 (1898) 13 f.; 14 (1899) 103 f.

[5] *Philol.* 39 (1880) 378 f.; *Jahr. Philol.* 135 (1887) 653 f.; Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 483 f.; Lucian, *De luctu*, 9, p. 926.

[6] Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 93; Euripides, *Orest.* 118.

[7] Benndorf, *Griech. Sicil. Vasenbilder* Taf. xiv, f.; Fairbanks, *Athenian White Lekythoi*, 346 f.

man while he lived. Dolls are brought to the graves of children; ducks or finches and rabbits, pets of the living, are brought to the tomb to amuse the dead. Most commonly of all the mourners hang wreaths on the monument, or fasten ribbons (taeniae) about the shaft. These practices all grow out of the belief that the soul of the dead is present to enjoy what the man had enjoyed before he died. At Athens, however, they tend to become a form of pious remembrance of the dead, instead of forms of worship.

FIG. 55. — ATHENIAN WHITE LEKYTHOI (Athens)

Offerings at the grave; a bird in a cage, a dish with fruit, a duck, and a flat basket (for vases, wreaths, etc.) are presented before the stele.

The worship of souls was probably one of the oldest elements of Greek religion, the foundation of the worship of chthonic gods, an all-important factor in the rise of hero worship and the worship of agricultural gods. It was perhaps the strongest force in giving a permanent unity to the family, such that the family could serve as the basis for an enduring organized state. A man felt that he must have children, his own or adopted, to keep up the worship of his soul after death. It is not easy to state exactly what advantage men expected from this worship, or with what feelings they looked forward to a future state. That the soul was an invisible being with some degree of consciousness, hovering about the grave and gratified by the offerings brought there, powerful to harm and

to help so that its blessing was sought by its survivors, is plain. It seems plain, also, that men did not look forward to any moral retribution after death, and that the thought of future blessedness was not part of the old soul worship. An unquestioning faith that something, however shadowy, persisted after death, was the foundation of the later developments of belief in the worship of Demeter and of Dionysus.

5. **The Gods of the Underworld.** — Along with the popular thought of the souls as little winged beings fluttering about the tomb, there existed from early days the thought of a realm where the souls were gathered. Whether it was placed beneath the earth, as the body was buried beneath the earth's surface, or whether men located it in the extreme west, as in the *Odyssey*, the conception of it was much the same. It was the "house of Hades," whose name means *invisible;* it was dark and gloomy, so that men at death bade farewell to the sun; Hades was called Polydegmon and Pankoinos, for he received all who came, Isodaites, for he assigned them equal lots.[1] That the lot of the good man should be better than the lot of the bad, is a thought that developed very slowly. In the *Odyssey* we read of the islands of the blessed, a future abode for Menelaus the son-in-law of Zeus, not for the good and the brave;[2] the stories of Tityos, Tantalus, Sisyphus, etc., punished for crimes against the gods, are not a part of early belief; even the judgments of Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Minos contain the thought of retribution only in germ.[3]

This "house of Hades" was the more real because streams swallowed up in limestone rock, wild caves and fissures, spots where mephitic gases were emitted, seemed to furnish an actual connection between this world and the world below. The chasm under the Areopagus rock at Athens was the seat of underworld beings.[4] In the precinct of Pluto at Hermione[5] there was a chasm

[1] See Preller-Robert, Index III, *s.v.* Aides.

[2] *Odyssey*, 4. 566 f.

[3] *Odyssey*, 11. 576 f.

[4] Thucydides, 1. 126; Euripides, *Elect.* 1270 f.; Pausanias, 1. 28. 6; *C.I.A.* II, 948–950.

[5] Pausanias, 2. 35. 10.

FIG. 56. — APULIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING

Hades and Persephone are seen beneath the canopy in the centre; at the left Orpheus, and Sisyphus driven to his task by a Fury, at the right the three judges of the dead and Tantalus fearing the impending rock, below Heracles with Cerberus are easily recognized.

through which Heracles is said to have brought up Cerberus from Hades, and near by was an "Acherousian lake." Strabo[1] says that the people of Hermione thought it unnecessary to give the dead any money for Charon, because Acheron lay in their own land, instead of separating the land of the living from the place of souls. At Eleusis, at Pheneos in Arcadia, at Lerna, and in Sicily, caves were pointed out as the spot where Hades carried off Persephone to be his bride.[2] At Hierapolis in Phrygia[3] there was an oracular cave under the temple of Apollo, filled with gases from below which only the initiated could breathe. Other "Charoneia" or "Plutonia" in Asia Minor are mentioned by Strabo.[4] Herodotus[5] tells of a soul-oracle (*νεκρομαντεῖον*) on the river Acheron in Thesprotia. At Taenaron also was an entrance to the lower world where souls could be evoked and consulted. The worship of the underworld gods was pretty closely limited to these spots where physical conditions suggested that the world below was directly accessible.

In the epic "mighty Hades and dread Persephone" were rulers of this gloomy world, as Zeus and Hera were rulers of the world above. The picture of Hades's realm was consciously made the counterpart to that of the realm of Zeus, a dim shadowy copy of life on the earth. All the awfulness of death gathered about the king and queen of the shades; they alone of the gods were untouched by human prayers; men sought their help only in wreaking vengeance on an enemy. "Persephone" like "Tisiphone" suggested pursuing punishment, anything but the Daughter who was worshipped with the Grain Mother at Eleusis. The transformation of this Persephone into the daughter of Demeter, and of Hades into Pluto, the god of wealth, is a problem not yet fully solved. There is reason to think that the god of riches in the earth, riches of mineral wealth and riches gained from the

[1] Strabo, 8, p. 373.

[2] Pausanias, 1. 38. 5; 2. 36. 7; Diodorus, Sic. 5. 3; Plutarch, *Quaest. phys.* 23, p. 917 F.

[3] Strabo, 13, p. 629.

[4] Strabo, 12. 579; 13. 629; 14. 649.

[5] Herodotus, 5. 92. 7.

earth by means of agriculture, was worshipped from early times in certain localities. He would be, for example, the agricultural Zeus worshipped with Ge (earth) in the island of Myconos,[1] and the Pluto of Eleusis. This god may then have been identified with the Hades of Homer and of later myth for the very simple reason that both were gods who ruled beneath the earth's surface. And as for Persephone, the story of her rape furnishes a kind of explanation as to how Demeter's daughter became Hades's queen. Demeter is not, like Pluto, an underworld god; it is through her daughter that Greek belief must make the connection between the queen of souls and the growing corn. Perhaps the sowing of the seed and the sprouting of the grain itself made the daughter of Demeter the underworld goddess for part of the year, a goddess who then was identified with the queen of souls. The epic conceptions, however, kept their hold on literature and in some measure on religious belief. Hades continued to mean death; Pluto remained a local divinity; it was only the initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries who could confidently look to the queen of the dead as the kindly daughter of the earth-mother.

The only other divinities of souls who found wide recognition in religion were the Erinyes. In the Homeric poems they enforced the rights of strangers, and in particular they guarded the rights of the firstborn.[2] Later they were the special avengers of crime against the family; they pursued Orestes for the murder of his mother Clytemnestra, even though this was vengeance prescribed by the Delphic Apollo.[3] The "Erinyes of Clytemnestra" who avenged the mother's blood, however rightly shed, were the spirits of the family, perhaps the souls of ancestors.[4] When the Erinyes (or Furies) were worshipped they were called Eumenides (Kindly), Semnai (Revered), Potniai (Queenly), as though men would flatter them by such names. They did, however, have another side to their nature in that, like Hades and Persephone, they were goddesses of agriculture.

[1] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 615. 25.
[2] *Odyssey*, 14. 57; *Iliad*, 15. 204.
[3] Aeschylus, *Eum.* passim.
[4] Rohde, *Psyche*, 247.

**6. Transfiguration of the Future Life in the Worship of Dionysus and of Demeter.** — We have seen that in the Homeric poems themselves there is a transition from the belief that souls are nothing but shades to the belief that these shades retain consciousness. This consciousness is a bane rather than a blessing, for it brings with it no joy. So the worship of souls lends to them certain powers for and against human welfare; it brings them nearer to men and makes them dependent on the gifts brought to them in worship; yet men do not look forward to any joy in the worship of their souls after death. The contrast is most striking between these views and that expressed by Pindar: "Blessed he who goes beneath the earth after seeing these mystic rites; he knows the goal of life, he knows its Zeus-given beginning."[1] It is in connection with the religious revival of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. that the new thought of the future life obtains a place in Greek religious belief.

The nature of Dionysus worship and its introduction into Greece are considered in Part II (Chap. iii). In Thrace the worshippers of this god believed in the continued existence of the soul after death and the return of the soul to this world again. In the actual experiences of a religious frenzy in which men were "possessed" by the god, called by the divine name, gifted with divine foresight, the Thracians realized their belief that the soul was made of divine stuff. The revival which brought this religion into Greece, came with convincing force, for the northern god made his presence felt by his worshippers. The Greeks too yielded to his maddening touch and found proof in personal experience that the soul of the worshipper was of the same nature as the god who possessed it. From the epic on, immortality and divinity were almost interchangeable terms. It was good logic for the Greek to hold that if the soul of the living man is of divine nature, the soul of the dead continues to be divine and immortal.

This new phase of religion with its wild orgiastic ritual was diametrically opposed to the Homeric standards. Its rapid prog-

[1] Pindar, *Frag.* (102) 114.

ress was in some measure due to its uncompromising claims; its decline was inevitable except as its practices were modified to correspond with the habits of Greek thought. But though the "revival" lost much of its vitality, though the worship of Dionysus was reduced to a state cult in which religious experience gave way to splendid forms, its power did not completely die. The longing for a real future life which it stimulated in individuals, led to private "initiations" and religious associations in order to secure the favor of underworld gods; its aspirations reappeared in the poetry of Sophocles and the philosophy of Plato; in the worship of Demeter at Eleusis the new conceptions found a congenial soil in which they sprang up and bore abundant fruit.[1]

The mysteries of Eleusis and similar rites elsewhere in Greece were based on an old peasant worship of agricultural deities. The gods of the dead who were buried in the earth, and of the grain which sprang from the earth, were not sharply distinguished, but at Eleusis the earlier purpose of the rites was to secure abundant crops. We may believe that Eleusis first developed as a priest-state devoted to the worship of the grain goddesses, and sought to make good its claim to be the centre and source of their worship.[2]

It was the introduction of Iacchus (a form of Dionysus) into these mysteries which gave them their distinctive character in the great days of Greece. That same assimilating power which later brought Asclepius and his healing rites into this worship, some two centuries earlier enabled the Eleusinian goddesses to appropriate the essence of the Dionysus revival by making a place in their worship for Iacchus. In the fifth century B.C. all the emphasis in the mysteries was on the hope for a life of blessedness after death for those who had been initiated. The source of this hope was no new dogma. The universal belief that souls persisted after death was now a belief that they persisted with some degree of consciousness; at Eleusis this belief was enriched by the *experience* of initiation, the experience that Hades was not implacable and

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 128, and notes.

[2] *Supra*, p. 129 f.

cruel to those who seek him rightly, the experience of the blessedness which his queen Persephone granted to the initiated. Iacchus, the reborn Dionysus, was only the symbol for that religion of experience which found a truly Greek form in these mysteries.

The Eleusinian rites were but one of many forms of initiation, the aim of which was to set one's self right with the gods of the lower world. Their widespread influence was due to the policy of Peisistratus; by including Eleusis among the cults of the Athenian state he gave political sanction to a worship hitherto purely local, and at the same time enabled the state religion to meet the new demand for a "soul-saving" worship. Nevertheless, the Dionysus-belief that the soul was divine and immortal remained the possession of a few. For the Athenian in the days of Pericles death was (1) departure from this world of reality and joy, and (2) the entrance on a future life not uncomfortable so long as his descendants continued to bring him offerings; but if he were initiated at Eleusis it meant also (3) a life of real blessedness in the presence of Persephone and Hades. Thus Socrates could anticipate meeting just judges and the great men of past days in that future world; the Antigone of Sophocles could look forward to an affectionate welcome from the father and mother and brothers whom "Persephone had received among the dead"; and Isocrates could say "those who share this initiation, have sweet hopes both for the end of life and for all future time."[1]

[1] Plato, *Apol.* 41 A-C; Sophocles, *Ant.* 897 f.; Isocrates, 4. 28; cp. Aristophanes, *Ran.* 380 f.; Pausanias, 10. 31. 9.

# PART II

# HISTORICAL SKETCH OF RELIGION IN GREECE

## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNINGS OF GREEK RELIGION

**1. Periods; Methods of Investigation.** — The early history of Greek religion, and even the periods in which this history has to be considered, have been profoundly modified by recent investigations. During the last thirty years the remarkable discoveries in Greece and Crete have added new and striking chapters to our knowledge of Greek history. Incomplete as are the data in regard to the religion of Greece before 1000 B.C., it is now possible to speak tentatively of its form during the Mycenaean age, and even in the period which preceded the Mycenaean age. Coming down to the Homeric poems, we find that they raise one of the most difficult questions in the history of Greek religion; to interpret the epic picture of religion and explain its relation to religious belief and practice in the age when the poems arose, are problems which have received most contradictory solutions. In the later history of this religion the attention of the student is focussed on that important movement connected with the religion of Dionysus and of Demeter, of which the Orphic sect was but one expression. Accordingly the main topics to be considered in a sketch of the history of Greek religion will be the following: —

I. The Beginnings of Greek Religion.
II. Religion in the Greek Middle Ages (1100–700): The epic picture of religion.

III. Religion in the Seventh and Sixth Centuries, B.C.: The rise of Demeter and Dionysus worship.

IV. Religion in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries, B.C.: Hellenism at its height.

V. The Outcome: Religion in the Hellenistic age; The influence of Greek religion on Roman civilization and on Christianity.

Before discussing the lines of investigation by which knowledge of the earlier epochs may be obtained, it is necessary to point out two principles which have often been overlooked in dealing with this general topic. In the first place Greek religion cannot be studied by itself. It is so intimately connected with other phases of civilization and culture, not to say with political development, that its history must be studied step by step with the broader history of the people. The epochs of the history of Greek religion are not different from the epochs of the history of the Greek people. The forces which directed politics and scientific investigation, the social and moral ideals, even the forms of commerce and industry, are determining facts for the development of this religion. Perhaps the study of religious phenomena has as much to contribute to Greek history in general as the study of industry, or the study of social institutions; conversely the study of Greek religion without taking into account other phases of life can never produce trustworthy results. A few examples will illustrate the importance of this principle. We have pointed out that the Zeus worshipped in each hamlet differed in greater or less degree from any other form of Zeus. The question whether one "sky god" has been split up into these countless forms, or whether the similar gods worshipped by different groups of people gradually tended to be merged into one god, father of gods and men, is fundamental. The long-accepted belief that the unity of Zeus is original, the variety of the local forms of Zeus a development more or less accidental, neglects the historic fact that the conscious unity of the Greek people was the outcome of a long process of development.

Again, it is not reasonable to regard Crete as the one main source of Greek religion,[1] unless it is also the source of other forms of Greek civilization. If it should seem to be proved that the cults of Crete were a determining factor for religion as it is found on the Balkan peninsula, it would still be necessary to look for Cretan influence along other lines before the proof would be complete. Once more, the two main types of sacrifice in Greece — the communion meal and the piacular sacrifice — cannot stand for two periods in the history of religion, until each form has been definitely connected with one epoch in the history of the Greek people. The principle under discussion does not rest on any mere theoretical basis. Such historical facts as that hunting is more primitive than the keeping of domestic animals, that a nomad life precedes agriculture, that seafaring and commerce belong to a higher stage of society still, are facts reflected in the history of each god as well as in the history of worship.

A second principle, now somewhat generally recognized, is that localities of worship and local forms of worship tend to persist through the greatest changes in outward belief. The discussion of ancient Greek cults in Christian Greece (cp. p. 285 f.) illustrates the wide reach of this principle. The tenacity of old forms always characterizes religion more than any other department of human life. The interpretation of a worship may change and imposing ceremonies may be added; still the forms are likely to continue as they have been handed down, means by which the divine power may be propitiated. The flexibility of myth stands in striking contrast with the relatively fixed character of worship. Even when myth stood in much closer relation to belief than in the days when it furnished the theme of lyric or tragic poet, yet its ready response to any change in environment must be admitted. Consequently the investigation of myth yields relatively little for the history of religion. On the other hand worship is something so intensely practical, so tenacious of old forms though their meaning

[1] As does O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte.*

be forgotten, so slow to yield even when the religious consciousness demands some new type of religion, that in the study of cult-practices is to be found material for the entire religious history of such a people as the Greeks.

In the effort to reconstruct the early history of Greek religion before the rise of any literature, several lines of investigation are to be pursued. (1) The first definite effort to deal with this problem used the method of Indo-European parallels. The wonderful advance in the knowledge of Indo-European languages which followed the discovery and critical study of Sanskrit gave rise to the belief that a similar method would yield equally important results in the history of other phases of culture. The comparative method was applied to the study of social, industrial, political, and religious institutions with varying success. Although the belief in one Indo-European race has been somewhat shaken, yet the fact that all the European languages go back to one source justifies the student in seeking some likeness in the early religious development of the peoples who spoke these languages; indeed, the historic relation between different phases of culture demands that such a course be followed. At the same time the fact that religious belief and practice do not follow exactly the same lines of development as do social or political institutions, is a warning to caution. When one people subdues another and occupies its land, sometimes the institutions and the language of the conquerors prevail in the territory they have won, or on the other hand the language and the civilization of the country may survive the political changes, as was the case in Greece under Roman domination. In the first instance the conquerors may not dare to neglect the gods and the worship they find in the land, though they bring their own gods with them; in the second instance the conquerors may introduce their gods that brought them victory, even though their language tends to die out. Moreover, it is evident that the spirit of a people dominates and shapes religious belief more than it can affect language on the one hand, or the forms of religious practice on the other hand. It is just this tenacity of religious

forms along with the flexibility of the content in these forms which makes it difficult to apply the comparative method to the historical study of religion.

(2) A second method of investigation uses the archaeological remains which have recently been discovered in such abundance in Greece, in the Aegean islands, and in Crete. By means of the relations existing between early Greece and Egypt it is possible to get, with some assurance, an approximate date for these remains. The difficulty which confronts the student here is to determine what objects really have religious significance, and then to ascertain just what this significance is. The only safe principle is to reject for the time being all monuments the religious meaning of which cannot be proved by the circumstances of their discovery, by comparison with remains from a later date, or by their relation to religious objects among related peoples. Even then, it may be impossible to determine the significance of definitely religious monuments for early Greek religion.

(3) Thirdly, some inferences may be drawn from the practices of later worship. Many of the local forms of worship in later time conform to the type suggested by the Homeric poems. Other practices, in themselves older, were profoundly modified by the religious movements of the seventh and sixth centuries, B.C.; there still remain some rites so out of line with the development of religion during these epochs that they may fairly be referred to an earlier period. With all the obstacles to the successful use of this method, some results obtained by it may be accepted, especially when they are in harmony with the results of other lines of investigation.

(4) Again some historical data throw indirect but important light on the special history of religion. A study of the cults in colonies, the founding of which may be approximately dated, furnishes evidence as to the cults in the mother cities. Similarly the stage of religious development in Greece at the time of the great migrations, in particular the migrations across the Aegean to Asia Minor, is indicated by a comparison of the later conditions

in the regions affected. There can be no doubt that the people of Ionia worshipped Olympian deities, such as Zeus and Athena, Apollo and Poseidon, because they brought this worship with them from Greece. It is fairly well established that Heracles was not originally a Dorian god, yet it must be admitted that he was adopted as a national hero at the time of the "Dorian migration." Similarly the presence of many Thessalian cults in southern Greece points to the development of these cults in the north before a migration southward.

(5) Another line of historical argument is concerned with the names of places and the names of persons. There is no question that many names were "theophoric," derived from the name of the god himself, or sometimes from practices that obtained in his worship. The study of language throws some light on the epoch when these names were formed, and historical data occasionally indicate when they came into general use. For example, the use of the names of the Olympian gods without change as names for persons is known to be late; the formation of adjectives from these Olympian names to be used as names for persons or places was not common in early times; on the other hand such forms as *Athenai*, *Thebai*, *Alalkomenai*, belong to a far earlier epoch. The special advantages of this method, wherever it is available, are that it is entirely independent of the others mentioned and that the results thus obtained may be approximately dated.

**2. The Type of Early Religion in Greece.** — The common belief of kindred races in later times and in particular the later Greek belief has led to the following inferences as to this period in Greece. The objects and processes of nature, in so far as they attracted man's attention, were endowed with a life not unlike his own (animism), a life which we may describe by saying that nature was full of spirits. What these spirits were is hard to define; sometimes it would seem that they were the souls of the dead, not properly laid to rest, again it is not so much souls in objects as a sentient life peculiar to the objects themselves with which we have to deal. If we may say that nature was full of spirits, it is neces-

sary to add that relatively few of these spirits were important to man. Only such as represented the objects which he used and the processes in nature which affected him for good or evil, together with the souls of his ancestors, demanded his attention. These he sought, either to win over by his worship, or to banish out of this sphere of life by his arts; his gods were the powerful spirits whose continuous favor he sought to gain. Among the gods we may assume a heaven god, the source of light and warmth and rain; an earth goddess, mother of vegetation when fertilized by the rain; perhaps also a goddess of the hearth and the family, a Hestia. Spirits which protected the flocks from harm, or produced young of the flocks, or blessed the hunter in his search for game were also worshipped. In a word, it seems that some nature gods were generally worshipped, and some "departmental" gods. The contrast between these communities based on the family as the primary unit and the Semitic blood-clans, between these departmental gods (quite generally of the same type, though differing in detail) and the Semitic gods who are of one blood with their worshipping clans, is very striking.

We are justified further in the belief that worship and in particular the greater festivals were determined by the annual changes of nature. The equinoxes and the solstices, the date of sowing and of reaping, etc., were the times of worship. The forms of worship, no doubt, were shaped by that sympathy with the life and death of vegetation which gave rise to the belief in gods that were born and died each year. More than this, men thought by half-magical rites to induce germination of the seed, generation in animals, growth in plants and animals. The presence of these ideas and practices both in later Greece and among other Indo-European races indicates that they date back to a very early period.

Particular cases of cult survival cannot be traced back with any confidence to this epoch. Cults located on mountain tops, no doubt, date back to some early worship of the heaven god, cults in caves, to an early worship of the earth goddess who both

receives the dead and gives birth to vegetation. The reason for assigning to these cults an early date is that the developed Mycenaean civilization, like later civilization which centred in towns, was probably unfavorable to the creation of such localities of worship. In some particular cases the libation without wine, the sacrifices without blood, and even without fire, may be survivals of very early practice.[1] That springs, particular trees, certain kinds of animals, were held sacred by some communities, is altogether probable. The central feature of "totemism," the sacrificial meal of a clan on its kindred animal, is nowhere attested for Greece. On the other hand, the animal "symbols" of the Olympian deities, the eagle of Zeus, the owl of Athena, hardly originated as mere symbols; and it is also pointed out that the worship of a bear goddess (Artemis) by girls imitating bears by their movements and their brown clothing, and called "bears" (ἄρκτοι), may be the relic of a very early worship of animals.[2]

If the views presented in the preceding paragraph are correct, we must assume that a worship of "tendance," which aimed to secure the favor of real gods, always existed in Greece along with the worship of "aversion" by which men sought to drive away evil spirits and to distract the attention of beings which might harm them. This attempt to drive away evil, or in later language to "purify" one's self from evil, was unquestionably far more widespread before the rise of the definitely fixed Olympian deities which Homer pictures, than it was later; in fact these rites belong to the lowest stratum of Greek religion, although the attempt to treat them as exclusively the worship of any one period seems to me unhistorical, and unjustified by any arguments yet adduced in its favor. To this earliest period we are to assign none of the gods of later religion, not Zeus on the one hand, nor the chthonic gods on the other; rather we find here the germs out of which the later gods were developed: a sky god worshipped in many forms in different

[1] Polemon in scholion to Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 100; Pausanias, 1. 26. 6; Plato, *Leg.* 6, p. 782 C.

[2] Cp. *supra*, p. 122.

places who became Zeus, an earth goddess who appears later under several names, gods who preside over different human activities — no two just alike, and countless spirits many of which must be avoided and even averted by special rites.

**3. Early Religion in the light of Archaeological Remains.** — The excavations of Schliemann at Mycenae shed the first light on a period in Greek history, which till then was but dimly known through inferences from myth and from the epic. Later discoveries revealed similar remains all along the east coast of Greece, among the Aegean islands, on the coast of Asia Minor, and in Crete. The remains marked a distinct type of civilization, often called Mycenaean because Mycenae was one of its most important centres of influence. The pottery and utensils were of a type so marked that they were readily recognized whether they appeared along the Aegean sea, in Egypt, or in more distant regions. The situation of the cities, and the decorative designs on the remains, indicate that this was the civilization of a seafaring people. That it was at its height about 1500–1200 B.C. is shown by dated Egyptian objects in Mycenaean tombs and by Mycenaean objects found with dated remains in Egypt. Although the impulse to progress in art, in religion, as well as in commerce came from the east and south, there is little doubt that this civilization belonged to an essentially Greek people.

In Crete alone do we learn much of the earlier periods and the civilization out of which the Mycenaean civilization probably developed. The excavations of the last ten years in Crete seem to indicate three main periods of development, only the third of which is connected with what has been called Mycenaean. These periods are, for convenience, called by the names assigned by Mr. Arthur Evans, "Early Minoan," "Middle Minoan," and "Late Minoan," while subdivisions in the periods are indicated by the Roman numerals I–III.[1] The third main period was marked by the irruption into Crete of an Hellenic race from the north; of the

[1] The dates which may be assigned to these periods are discussed in Burrows, *The Discoveries in Crete*, and in Hawes, *Gournia*, p. 2 f.

earlier periods we can only say that the people were of a different race, not necessarily an Aryan race, of which traces have been found in Asia Minor, if not in Greece itself. It is clear that the first important civilization of the Aegean belonged to this race; that it centred in Crete; and that it developed into a sea-power,

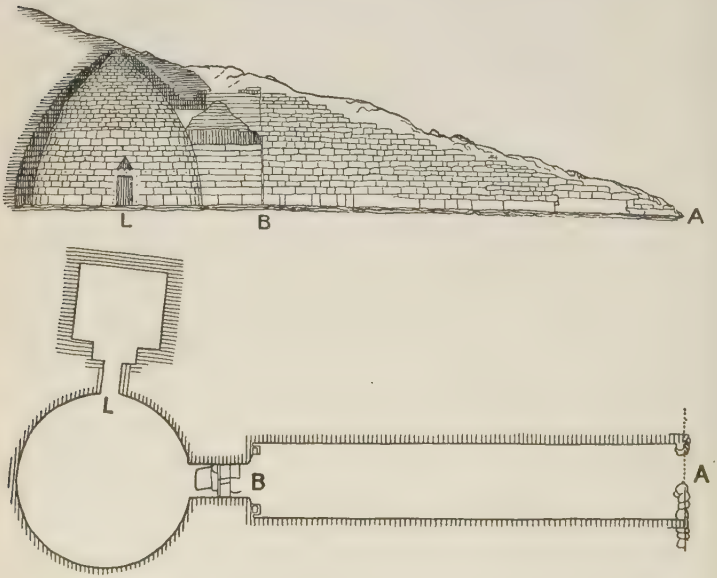


FIG. 57. — SECTION AND PLAN OF DOMED TOMB (Tholos) AT MYCENAE

which left its mark in the legends of Minos. The name "Mycenaean" must be limited to that phase of early civilization which developed in a Greek race through its contact with this earlier race in Crete, and which had its main centres in the Aegean islands and in Greece proper. At the same time it adopted so much from the earlier periods in Crete that it is almost impossible for us to treat it by itself.

So far as religion is concerned, it is clear, in the first place, that in all these earlier ages there was a real belief in the future life,

if not an actual worship of the dead. The utensils found in early Cretan tombs — vessels of stone or pottery or bronze, rings and jewelry, weapons, etc. — can only mean that the dead had the same wants as the living. The later domed tombs of "bee-hive" shape were elaborate structures erected as homes for the dead. Over an earlier "shaft" grave at Mycenae was found an altar with ashes and charred remains of domestic animals; here and elsewhere both the bones of sacrificed animals and the objects found with the dead are evidence of a real worship of the dead, a worship of tendance, so far as we can learn, not of aversion. The objects of thin gold plate found in such abundance at Mycenae suggest, perhaps, that the dead were shades who did not need such substantial ornaments and utensils as living men; yet the bronze vessels, the pottery, and the armor are such as living men used. The question whether worship continued to be offered at the tomb after the ceremony of burial was finished, cannot be answered absolutely. Dr. Wolters infers from the fragments of pottery found in the entrance of a bee-hive tomb near Menidi in Attica, that here water for bathing was regularly brought to the dead in a high basin, until the practice was stopped by the Pelo-

FIG. 58. — ATTIC BLACK-FIGURED VASE PAINTING

Bath vessel reconstructed from fragments before the tomb at Menidi.

ponnesian war;[1] if the inference is accepted, it means continued tendance of the dead. Again, the question whether rites in honor of the dead should be considered the worship of gods,[2] whether they imply a belief in beings themselves potent to send good and evil to the worshippers, may receive different answers. If the spirits of the dead were not banished from this world, but tended with kindly offices, we can but infer a real belief in their power to send divine blessings.

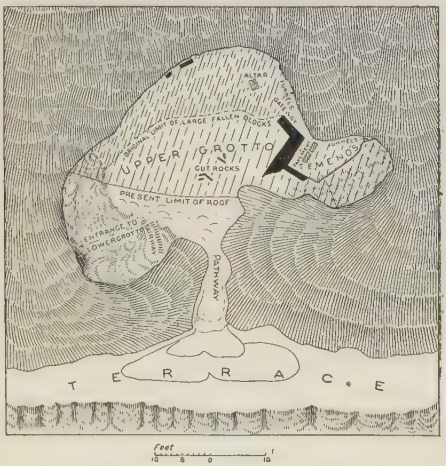


FIG. 59. — PLAN OF THE DICTAEAN CAVE

Other places besides the tomb where actual traces of worship have been found are the mountain cave and the palace shrine. The cave on the Cretan Mt. Dicte was an important centre of worship in the "Minoan" age. A large stone altar, small libation tables, layers of ashes with incinerated bones, fragments of pottery vases and figures, small double axes and figurines of bronze, all attest its importance as a shrine in the Middle and Late Minoan periods. There is no definite evidence as to the god or goddess here worshipped. Tradition and myth connect the birth of Zeus with Mt. Dicte as well as with Mt. Ida; we only know that with the advent of the Dorians in Crete the Idaean shrine rapidly gained the pre-

[1] *Jahr. Arch. Inst.* 13 (1898) 13 f.; 14 (1899) 103 f.

[2] On the interesting sarcophagus from Hagia Triada one scene is interpreted as representing worship offered to the dead man in front of the tomb; Lagrange, *La Crète ancienne*, 65, fig. 35.

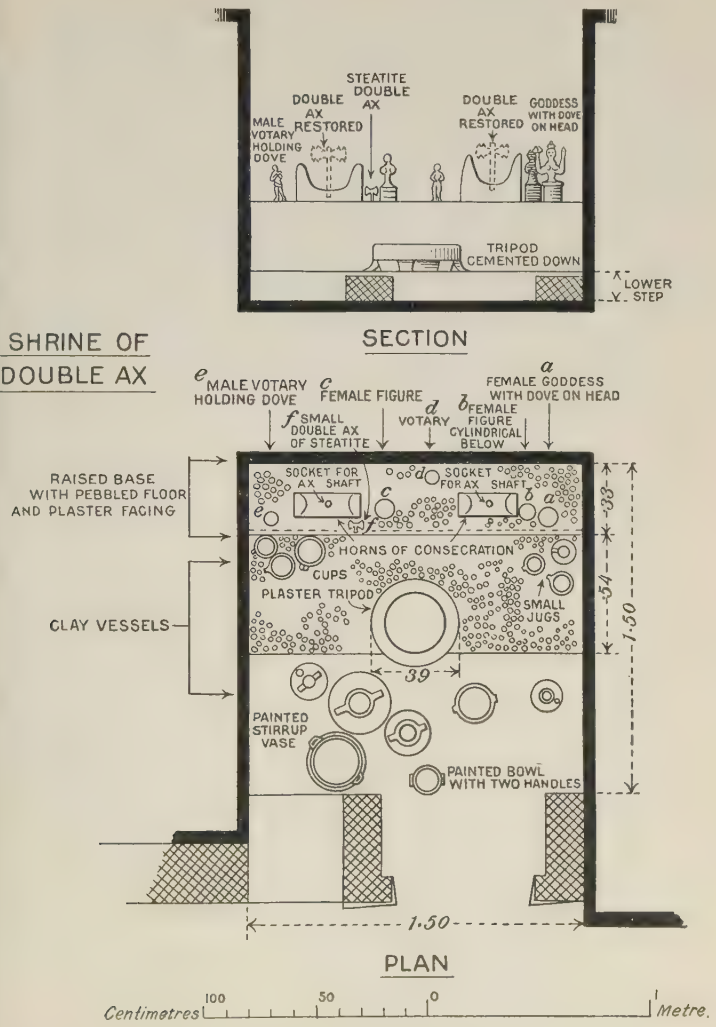


FIG. 60. — THE "SHRINE OF THE DOUBLE AXES" AT CNOSSOS

eminence, and that this was a shrine of Zeus, the Greek god of the heavens.

In the Cretan palaces which have been excavated at Cnossos, Phaestos, Hagia Triada, and Gournia, small rooms have been found which clearly were used for worship in the Middle Minoan (III) and Late Minoan periods. The most complete of these is the "shrine of the Double Axes" in the palace at Cnossos (Late Minoan III).[1] It is a small room about 1.50 m. square, divided into three parts by a difference of level. In the first section as one enters were found several amphorae and other vases; in the second section, which is slightly higher, a low tripod basin of plaster stood in the centre and about it were small cups and bowls of pottery; the third section, which was narrower and considerably higher, may be described as a shelf, on which stood five terra cotta figurines, a small double axe of steatite, a Maltese cross, and two "horns of consecration" of plaster, each with a socket in which perhaps a double axe once stood. These objects will demand consideration later.

On the mainland of Greece no such shrines have been found in Mycenaean palaces. A pit in the court of the palace at Tiryns has been interpreted as a pit altar. In any case we are probably right in assuming that in these palaces (and perhaps in the Cretan palaces) sacrifices were offered to the gods in the court or in the *megaron* opening off the court.

Among the objects used in worship the types of vases are not peculiar, except for the high, slender, funnel-shaped vase with handle at the top.[2] The conch-shell perhaps was used to summon either the gods or their worshippers. Liquid offerings were presented in the hollowed top of a stone or in some other flat basin. The altar itself was a square structure, sometimes represented as having one part higher than the other; or again, it takes the form of a pedestal with the sides cut back between the top and bottom.

[1] *Brit. School Annual*, 8 (1901) 95–105.

[2] Wide in *Ath. Mitth.* 26 (1901) 247 f.; Lagrange, *La Crète ancienne*, frontispiece.

It is not clear whether the altar was actually used for burnt offerings or whether they were burned (if they were burned at all) on the ground in the open air. In any case, the term altar has often been applied to what is essentially a pedestal or support.

Two monuments representing worship actually in progress deserve careful study. The first, a sarcophagus from Hagia Triada, is described and partially illustrated by Lagrange.[1] On one side is a scene of sacrifice: two women and a man blowing the flute stand behind a table on which lies a bull with blood flowing from his throat into a vessel below; then follows a priestess holding a basket of fruits or cakes above a low base, upright double axes with a black bird perched on them, and a building on which a plant is growing. On the other side offerings are brought and placed in a jar between double axes at the left; at the right small calves and a bowl (or boat) are brought by persons in a peculiar dress toward a tree and a stiff figure (the dead?) standing before a high structure (the tomb?). The second monument is the upper half of a small stone vase (Fig. 62). The scene apparently represents a procession of harvesters carrying long three-pronged forks, and headed by a man in a richly ornamented cloak or cape.[2] It is difficult to explain the procession other than as a religious act.

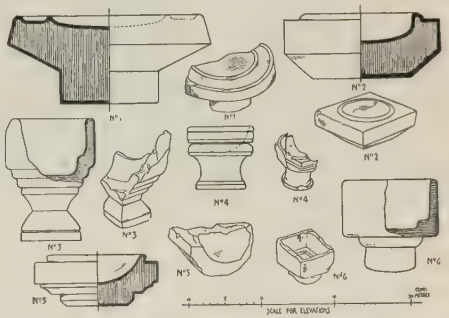

FIG. 61. — LIBATION TABLES AND DISHES

There is no evidence that idols in the proper sense of the term, anthropomorphic images which exemplified a god to his wor-

[1] Lagrange, *La Crète ancienne*, 61 f.

[2] Fowler and Wheeler, *Greek Archaeology*, 68.

shippers, were in general use; in fact none of the figurines found in these shrines are unmistakably gods, and, if they are to be interpreted as gods, it is quite unlikely that such small figures were themselves objects of worship. Various religious symbols, however, may be pointed out; representations of the gods appear in

FIG. 62. — STEATITE VASE FROM HAGIA TRIADA

scenes of worship depicted on seals, etc.; and the question as to the figurines needs further consideration.

Among the commonest symbols are the so-called "horns of consecration," two horns or prongs connected by a depressed line. In scenes of worship on gems, these horns stand on a sort of altar, and they are found on a miniature terra cotta altar from the Cnossos "Temple Repositories."[1] In the shrine described above they stand on the upper level with the figurines. A steatite

[1] Lagrange, *ibid.*, 83, fig. 62; *Brit. School Ann.* 9 (1902). Cp. the Hebrew "horns of the altar," *Exodus* 27. 2.

fragment shows two men holding out bowls before a wall with several pairs of horns.[1] The motive is repeated several times on representations of an architectural façade which suggests a temple, in remains both from Crete and Mycenae.[2] With it are often associated a pillar, a double axe, or, at Mycenae, a dove. The only interpretation yet suggested is that these horns are conventionalized from "boukrania," the skulls of sacrificed oxen with the horns attached, which are found in scenes of worship in this period as well as in later times. There are many indications that the bull was very important for religion in Crete.

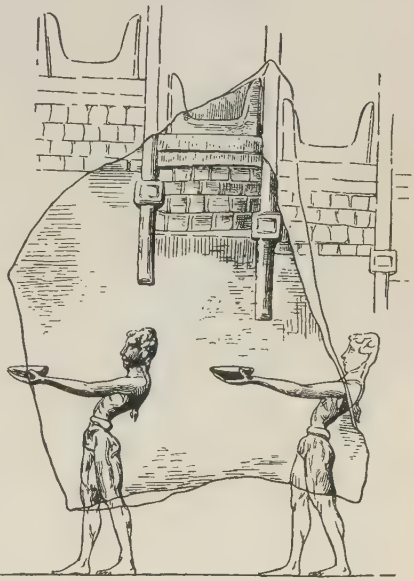

FIG. 63. — STEATITE OFFERTORY SCENE

Two figures stand holding out bowls before a wall on which are "horns of consecration."

One of the commonest symbols in this period was the symbol of power, the double axe. That this was often used with religious significance no one can question. It occurs in the "Shrine of the Double Axes" at Cnossos; many small bronze axes were found with some miniature shields in the later Minoan deposits of the Dictaean caves; a double axe is represented in scenes of worship on gems; it is associated both with "horns of consecration" and

[1] *Brit. School Ann.* 9 (1902) 129.

[2] *Ibid.* 7 (1900) fig. 9; p. 207, *infra*, fig. 65.

with the representation of a bull's head with horns. The use of the double axe on the sarcophagus from Hagia Triada has already been mentioned.[1] No trace has been found in Crete of a double axe which was suited for actual use as a weapon; it is simply a symbol of the power which such a weapon once gave. It is most naturally understood as the symbol of a god of the heavens, who was at the same time a war-god.

On the architectural façades mentioned above (p. 205) a pillar stands between the horns of consecration; usually it rests on a sort of altar base. While it is possible that this pillar is purely structural, it is more probable that it had some meaning for religion; in this case, the pillar in some rooms of the Cnossos palace may also have had some religious significance. The evidence for sacred pillars or stones elsewhere in Crete is slight.

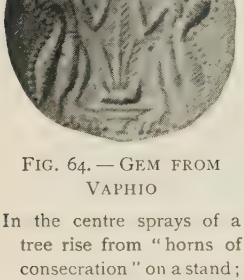

FIG. 64. — GEM FROM VAPHIO

In the centre sprays of a tree rise from "horns of consecration" on a stand; on either side a composite creature is holding up a pitcher.

That sacred trees had a place in the early Cretan religion cannot be disputed. A fragment of a steatite vase found at Cnossos[2] shows a fig tree in an enclosure with horns of consecration and worshippers. On gems a tree or branches from trees are found with worshippers before an altar with horns. Again, on the "heraldic gems" we often see between the two creatures a tree instead of a human figure; in one interesting case the creatures are watering the tree. It is possible that the Gournia shrine was once occupied by a sacred tree.[3]

The question of animal "symbols" is complicated by the occurrence on the gems, just mentioned, of creatures half animal, half man, and in several instances combining parts of several animals. These creatures seem to indicate worshippers, or rather

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 203. [2] Evans, *Jour. Hell. Stud.* 14 (1901) 103.
[3] Hawes, *Gournia*, 47 (B.E.W.).

attendants in worship, who might be either human beings or minor divine beings. The last explanation seems to be the more probable; in that case we should regard these curious creatures as the embodiment of lesser spirits whose function it is to keep up the worship of the gods. That spirits should be conceived in animal forms may be due to a "totemistic" range of ideas, but there is no clear evidence of totemism and no great probability that it existed in Crete or in Greece at this time. Except for the serpent, the one clear instance of a "sacred animal" is the dove, which is found with the horns on a complicated shrine façade, again on a female figure which the Greeks would have called Aphrodite, and in other connections.

FIG. 65. — THIN GOLD PLAQUE FROM MYCENAE

Several pairs of horns and three double columns are seen in the façade, above which are two doves.

While no real idols have been found, there are various representations of the gods on gems and in painting, and some small figures which may be divinities. The small pottery figures found in such abundance on Mycenaean sites have no doubt some religious significance. They represent a woman, either with raised hands or with her hands clasped to her breast, and sometimes holding a child. A few figures of a woman in thin gold have also been found. What use was made of these figures is not clear. In a shrine of the palace at Cnossos, however, there were found three pottery figures of a type somewhat similar to the pottery figures of Tiryns and Mycenae; in this instance the "horns," the double axe, and the vessels found with them indicate that they played a part in actual worship. A dove stands on the head of one of the figures.

At Cnossos, in the shrine at Gournia, and elsewhere in Crete, have been found figures of pottery or faience, dressed in tight bodice and full flounced skirt, often with a serpent twined about the body. It has been customary to treat at least the figures with dove or serpent as goddesses, while others have more often been regarded as worshippers. Probably all are votive offerings, for there is no reason why figures of the god as well as of the worshipper should not be so presented.

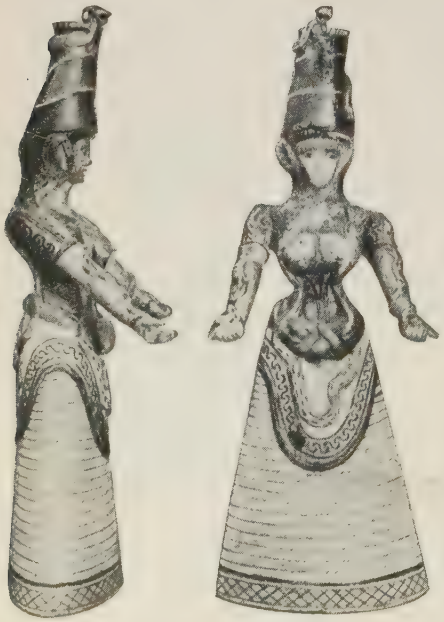

FIG. 66. — FAIENCE FIGURE FROM CNOSSOS

The scenes on gems and seal impressions include both divine and human beings. We can but call it a goddess who stands on a mountain flanked by lions, with a shrine at the left, and a worshipper at the right.[1] Probably it is a goddess with a lion, and a god with a lioness on two impressions found a little later.[2] On the often published gem from Mycenae (Fig. 67), there is little question that the figure seated under a tree is a goddess; her attendants may be nymphs or human beings. The figure on this same gem with double shield and spear, which also occurs in a wall painting at Mycenae, I can only regard as a god, possibly the god of the heavens as a war-god. Finally, the figure of a woman with an animal in each hand,

[1] *Brit. School Ann.* 7 (1900) 29. [2] *Ibid.*, 9 (1902) 59.

which occurs both on gems and in other forms of representation, is doubtless a goddess, the predecessor of the so-called "Persian Artemis."

It is very noticeable that the evidence for a male god is slight. The important divinity of the Minoans was a goddess, a goddess connected with the earth by her snake, with the heavens by her dove. So soon as we begin to deal with a Hellenic race it is fair to compare her with the Cretan Rhea (the Mother, perhaps Mother Earth). The dove, even at this early day, may suggest Aphrodite. The goddess of wild animals would, for such a race, be a form of Artemis, the queen of wild beasts and the patron of hunters. Finally the war-god (perhaps the god of the double axe) would of course be the god of the heavens, Zeus, the consort or the son of the earth goddess. The archaeological evidence is such as to justify the belief that these old Cretan deities would be received by invading Greeks and worshipped under their Greek names.

FIG. 67. — GOLD RING FROM MYCENAE (.035 m. long)

**4. Early Religion as inferred from the Following Period.** — A second main line of argument with reference to early Greek religion would proceed backward from the known to the unknown, from cult survivals back to earlier types of worship, and from later religious conceptions back to their probable sources. In the present state of our knowledge it is absolutely impossible to assign survivals of early worship definitely to a Mycenaean age, to an earlier Minoan age, or to wandering Greek tribes. Rites which have to do with the care of flocks may go back to nomad tribes; unquestionably with the development of civilization increasing stress was laid on agriculture and agricultural worship; the development of city life with its stimulus to manufactures and commerce must have been reflected in the forms of religion. In particular, the spirits of plant life and the ritual of sowing and reaping, which

Homer absolutely neglects, can be no new creation of the period following Homer; they are the background for the religious revival of the period which followed Homer. This line of argument, however, becomes really fruitful for the epoch under consideration only when we take into account the Homeric poems.

If we assume as the generally accepted position that our *Iliad* was for the most part a product of the ninth century B.C. in Asia Minor, that the epic gives us older "Aeolic" material in an Ionic form, and finally that the Olympian deities are a Thessalian product brought from the mainland of Greece in a migration across the Aegean, the epic world of the gods in approximately the epic form is thrown back of 1000 B.C. But this epic picture marks a definite stage at the end of a long period of development, a period which ends rather later than the close of the Mycenaean epoch. The influence of epic poetry both on the general conception of religion and man's attitude toward the gods and on his ideas of particular deities can hardly be overestimated. Yet it seems clear that the epic lays did not themselves create Zeus and Athena and Poseidon; rather they presuppose fairly well defined ideas of these Olympian gods and their functions. So we must assume for the Mycenaean epoch — at least in northern Greece — such a process of evolution in religious belief as will end in the Olympian gods, such forms of worship as are not out of harmony with this belief.

We shall assume, then, that in Thessaly the god of the heavens, worshipped on Olympus and other mountains, was not so much a war-god as a divine ruler, whose nature came to reflect the ideal of the human king. Each community had worshipped its heaven-god, source of light and rain; now as the communities of Thessaly or Boeotia or the Argolid were united into larger units, these heaven-gods were fused into one; as the ruler and his court gained in splendor, both ruler and people would think of their greatest god as the ruler among the gods.

Even apart from archaeological remains, the Greek calendar, with its emphasis on the birth and death of vegetable life, would lead us to assume a mother goddess, the mother earth, who is the

ultimate source of all life. Granted that each community had such a goddess, the consort (and sometimes the mother) of the heaven-god, we need not be surprised that she develops differently in different localities. As the communities of one region are brought into closer touch with each other, and as their civilization is enriched by elements which each contributes as well as by elements from outside, the form of Rhea appears in Crete, the form of Hera the queen in the Argive plain, while other forms of the goddess (Leto, Dione, Themis, Cybele, Europa?, Demeter, etc.) are shaped in other regions. From goddesses as numerous as the communities which worshipped them, but of one general type, there developed a relatively small number of goddesses, each a definite many-sided personality.

Sometimes closely related to the mother of vegetable life, no doubt sometimes distinct, the early communities of Greece worshipped a queen of wild beasts, the patron of the chase; the goddesses of this type gave rise to the Olympian Artemis, later the exemplification of chastity and the companion of Apollo. And Apollo was one outgrowth of the shepherd-god existing in each community, himself once a shepherd, protecting the sheep from wolves (Apollo Lykeios), patron of the music and the games that shepherds loved. Each community recognized a god of fire, the patron of smiths, though here again some regions contributed much more than others to the making of Hephaestus. The Aphrodite of later religion sometimes included elements that came from the old mother goddess; doubtless many of the early communities recognized in addition now a spirit who presided over human love, now a goddess of family life, both of which were taken up into Aphrodite. Every seafaring people worshipped spirits of the sea; some of these remained in local worship and in myth as distinct beings, more were fused in Poseidon, the god whose resistless might and capricious nature expressed the general Greek thought of the sea.

Of the process here described the epic contains scarcely a trace; on the other hand, there is hardly one centre of worship

where the marks of it are not to be discerned. The nature of the process is suggested by the history of the people. Families and tribes in much the same stage of culture, and with much the same range of ideas, make their way down into Greece. In the Mycenaean age larger political and social commercial groups are gradually formed, with a civilization richer and more varied as it embraces elements from different sources within and without the country. Similarly we must assume that the conception of nature-spirits, of souls, of "departmental gods" (gods of the chase, of the flocks, of seafaring, etc.), was originally much the same for different communities, but nowhere quite the same, and that in the larger civilization which developed the gods of each type grew richer and more varied with elements drawn from different communities, different regions in the Greek world, and different sources outside of Greece. In this sense the Zeus or the Poseidon of the epic was a "composite photograph" of earlier Zeuses and Poseidons. The process was one of synthesis or of "condensation," to use the word of Eduard Meyer.[1] But if the Zeus of Homer was a

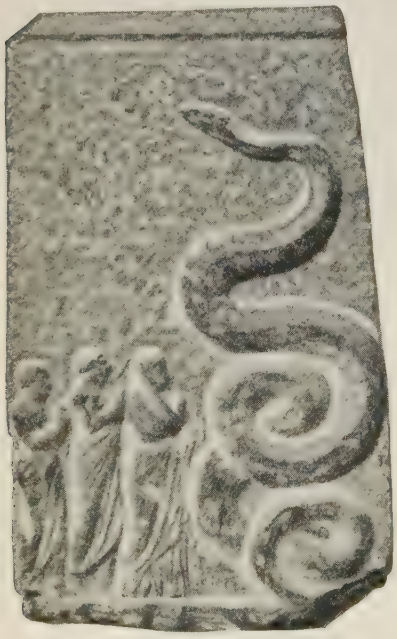

FIG. 68. — MARBLE RELIEF FROM THE PEIRAEUS (in Berlin)

Worshippers approaching a serpent (Zeus Meilichios).

[1] *Geschichte des Altertums*, 2. 96.

composite photograph of earlier forms of the god, this is only half the story. Each cult of Zeus continued to emphasize those peculiar characteristics of the god which it had always emphasized, in addition to the characteristics generally adopted, with the result that the Zeus of each cult remained individual and was known in worship by an added individual name. Zeus Lykaios worshipped with human sacrifice in Arcadia, Zeus Trophonios worshipped in a Boeotian cave, Zeus Meilichios conceived now in human form, now in the form of a serpent, are extreme examples of this individualization preserved in worship. Each local cult modified the conception of Zeus for a narrower or wider region according to the extent of its influence; the god of each local cult was more or less modified by the general Greek conception of Zeus. Finally, it should be noted that there were some local gods which were never brought under any of the general Greek gods, and others, like the Zeus Amphiaraus of Oropus, who were thought of as distinct beings more often than as forms of Zeus. The "heroes" were often local gods whose cult was of such a character that it was more natural to bring them under the category of chthonic gods and souls than to connect them with any of the Olympian rulers.[1]

It has been pointed out that almost every god in worship has two names, of which the first is ordinarily one of the epic series, the second a more individual name.[2] So far as the history of geographical names and names of persons in Greece has been carried, it appears that a large percentage of these names had once some religious significance. It is clear that names derived from the divine names in use in the epic (Apollonios, Athenaios, Dionysios) are relatively late, usually far later in their formation than the epic itself. On the other hand, names of persons and places whose formation points to an earlier epoch are many of them connected with the "epithet names" of the gods, the second of the two names used in worship, *e.g.* Alalkomenai, Chryse, Delos, Kolias, Orthosia, Potniai, Sosandra (but compare Athenai, Hermione). The inference is, not that epithet names are necessarily

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 165 f. [2] Cp. *supra*, p. 145.

older than the names used in the epic, but that many epithet names do go back to the earliest period in Greek religion of which we have any trace, and that at this time they were the personal names of the local gods. That epithet names were always so important in prayer, points in the same direction.

Although the processes which I have described were always going on in Greece, they have been discussed here because they are important only for the earlier epochs and in particular for the Mycenaean age. Such was the influence of the epic that its standards tended to fix the conceptions of the gods and in large degree to put an end to that phase of religious development which has been under discussion. So far as forms of worship are concerned, the same influences were at work. However, the possible range of original variation was less, and the final unification was never so marked as in the case of the gods, while the effect of the epic in checking the process of development was less important. In discussing the following period, it will appear that the epic helped the spread of the communion-meal sacrifice, especially in the great city festivals. Still I find no satisfactory evidence that the period preceding the epic was characterized by the other main type of Greek worship (whole burnt offerings of animals ordinarily black, sacrificed at night to chthonic gods); nor is it clear that the worship of this period was primarily a worship of "aversion."[1] The subject may be dismissed with the statements (1) that local forms of worship were so tenacious that they yielded only slowly to any universalizing influence, and (2) that probably the communion-meal sacrifice had already become in some measure a general form of worship by the time of the migrations which carried the Olympian gods to Asia Minor, so that it could be adopted by the epic as a form universally applicable.

[1] Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 9; Gruppe, *Griech. Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, 758 f.

# CHAPTER II

## RELIGION IN THE GREEK "MIDDLE AGES"

**1. Changes in the Period 1100–700 B.C.** — The name "middle ages" is applied to that period of European history between the decay of an older civilization and the rise of new intellectual and spiritual life in the Renaissance. In this same sense it fairly describes the period between the decay of the Mycenaean civilization and the rise of that new life which we may call Hellenic. The downfall of these early kingdoms and their culture was hastened, as in the case of the later European parallel, by a shifting of races which brought rude, vigorous peoples into contact with the worn-out remnants of the earlier civilization; yet in each case decay within, rather than attack from without, was the real cause of change. In Greece we have reason to think that mountain tribes from Epirus made their way into the Thessalian plains, with a resulting shift of the population southward into the Peloponnese and eastward into Asia Minor. The evidence for this change varies greatly in different localities. In Laconia the control of the country by a relatively small band of "Dorians" left its mark till long after Greece lost its independence; while in Attica the people claimed to be autochthonous. The connection of the Aeolians in Asia Minor with Thessaly, of Ionians with Euboea and Attica, of the southern Greek cities in Asia Minor with the Peloponnese, can readily be traced.

The first result of these changes was a breaking down of the old kingdoms, a decay of the old cities, and a loss of many of the earlier arts. But on the whole these four centuries must have been a period of reconstruction. Except in a few instances the

old and the new elements in the population were fused into one, to the advantage of both parties. Out of political confusion there came first a sort of feudalism attached to the soil; "princes" rich in flocks and fields, holding rough court in farmyard palaces, were the knights of the epic. The development of trade, and that in Greek hands, brought with it the rise of such cities as Chalcis and Corinth. According to the Homeric picture of Ithaca the "princes" gathered frequently in the capital city. In Attica, as in other regions, the control of the country was gradually centred in one city. In this period also we find trading cities sending out colonies along the lines of commerce as far as the Black Sea in the northeast and Cyrene and Sicily and Marseilles in the west. With one splendid exception the age is barren of literature and art; the Greek epic is a product of the Greek middle ages.

The history of religion reflects these social changes. The shifting of population tended on the whole to increase the number of cult centres, for the intruders brought with them their own gods and quite generally they also adopted the worship which they found. A cursory glance at a map of Greek cult centres would reveal the shifting southward of many forms of worship belonging in the north. This process in itself would help the spread of the "Olympian" gods, the gods of epic, for the elements of this phase of religion no doubt belonged with the name Olympus in Thessaly; and in general, names brought from the north would be commonly recognized names which the wandering epic bards would find adapted to their purposes. At the same time many less important names would be cut off from worship by this very shifting, celebrated names that remained in myth at the disposal of the poet. The gods of agriculture, on the other hand, remained as gods of the land, worshipped that they might bless the crops of that locality, but not readily adapted to the purposes of myth or poetry. With the development of trade and commerce by sea, Poseidon gained rapidly in importance; Apollo, god of flocks in central Greece, was adopted as their patron by many of the Dorian communities, though perhaps his earlier connections were rather with Ionians;

Zeus of Olympus made good his position as king of gods and father of men.

Two points in the religious changes deserve special notice, the form of religion in the new city life, and the religious "Amphictyones." The older cult centres, especially those which persisted through this period, were not generally in centres of population; they were not chosen for the convenience of men, but where men could find the gods — by some spring with luxuriant vegetation about it, in caves or on mountain tops, in spots where men for whatever reason had felt some manifestation of the presence of the gods. With the new development of city life, the old cults of that locality persisted, the worship of the families who came to the city was established, and very commonly branches of the important cults in all the region were located in the city. The purpose of the branches was in a measure to obtain the blessing of such gods for the city, but even more in order that the customary worshippers of these gods might still worship them conveniently and without repeated pilgrimages to the old shrines. So we find in the city of Athens temples to the Dionysus of Eleutherae, to the Artemis of Brauron, to the Demeter of Eleusis, not to mention less important instances of the process in question.

Again, we find so-called Amphictyones, groups of communities who unite in worship at some important centre. The Tetrapolis of the plain of Marathon was a small group essentially religious. Along the east coast of Greece from Prasiae in Laconia north to Athens and Orchomenos, the cities joined in the worship of Poseidon on the island of Calauria; in Boeotia another group of towns worshipped Poseidon at Onchestos; and the temple of Poseidon at Mycale was the centre of a similar group of twelve cities in Asia Minor. Delos was the centre of Apollo worship, first for the near-by islands, then for all the Ionic world; thus a hexapolis in Asia Minor shared the worship of Apollo Triopios near Cnidos. A sacred alliance bound together cities of Elis and Messene in the worship of Zeus at Olympia. Most important of all in this period was the Amphictyony of north and central

Greece which centred about the worship of Demeter at Anthela in the Pass of Thermopylae. Some of these religious groups lost their significance later; others, like the Amphictyony which met at Thermopylae, and the Delian worship of Apollo, became vital factors in the history of Greece.

The influence of social changes on forms of worship is evident in at least one direction. From the custom in Sparta, where alone it persisted during later centuries, we are led to infer that it was the practice of the Dorian tribes to eat the principal meal of the day together rather than separately by families. Naturally the meal was the centre of any worship which involved animal sacrifice for food. The Dorian practice would necessarily help to extend this type of sacrifice, which involved a common meal. It was, moreover, a type of sacrifice suited to the descriptions of the epic poet; nor was any form of worship better adapted to the needs of the rising cities than the procession and the communion meal. Thus, although the local forms of worship ordinarily persisted at each cult centre, the common meal, which became for religion the communion meal, was from this time on regarded as the normal type of Greek worship.

**2. Religion in the Homeric Poems.** — The one monument of this period, the source of our knowledge of its civilization, is found in the Homeric poems. The *Iliad* is ordinarily assigned to the ninth century B.C., the *Odyssey* to the eighth; yet every student of the poems recognizes that the language and the verse, if not the picture of social and political life, are the outcome of a long process of development. If the poems were for the most part completed in somewhat their present form by 700 B.C., the beginning of epic poetry must be sought in the later days of Mycenaean culture, or early in the "middle ages," while the influence of that culture was still felt in many localities.

The account of religion and other phases of culture in the epic is not wholly different from the nature of the language. The epic language was never spoken, yet it includes no "manufactured" forms or grammatical usages; it is so consistent that it is difficult

to trace any evolution in assumed strata of the poem; it came to be understood all over Greece where it was difficult for those who spoke one dialect to understand those who spoke dialects not closely related. We are justified in assuming that the picture of religion, in like manner, does not give the religion of any one place or one period, though it includes no absolutely new creations of the poet; that its consistency is due to the poet's unconscious art; that it was accepted and understood all over Greece, where the worship of one cult centre would ordinarily be foreign to that of another cult centre.

On this assumption it might fairly be claimed that the account of religion presented in the epic has no place itself in a history of Greek religion, for it is not a real phase of that history. Just as epic language is not the language of conversation at any particular time or place, but is in one sense an artifical product, so epic religion is in that same sense artificial. But it is historic in the same sense that the language is historic. In the first place, the elements which it selects and combines (we may add, unconsciously) are every one of them drawn from actual worship and belief. Secondly, it is the product of a long period in which the epic was in actual touch with real religion, modifying that religion and being modified by it. Nor should it ever be forgotten that the epic, after it was completed, was one of the most important factors in making the later religious history of Greece.

The influence of the epic will be considered later as occasion offers. The other two points mentioned in the preceding paragraph demand a word more before we proceed. The elements with which the epic picture of religion began, the main lines in its account of the gods and of worship, date back at least to the end of the Mycenaean epoch. We have already pointed out that Zeus and Poseidon, Apollo and Athena were gods of Thessaly, Olympian gods, before the migrations to Asia Minor. The communion-meal sacrifice and the libation to the gods undoubtedly existed as forms of worship from very early times, though their universality may be questioned. Divination by omens, especially

omens from birds, was adopted, not invented, by bards. On the other hand, it is clear that there were countless forms of divination and worship, not to speak of magic rites, which the poets passed by without mention.

And the very fact that the epic is the product of a long period during which its forms were gradually fixed, a period also in which political changes had brought strong solvents to bear on social and religious life, leads us to look for constant reciprocal influences between actual religion and epic religion. The migrations to Asia Minor had deprived religious practices of the strong support which their proper locality always lends; to this extent religious practice in Asia Minor was much more amenable to epic influence than language. It lay in the very nature of the epic to draw a picture of life which would be universally understood; whatever the elements with which it started, all that was not understood necessarily tended to give way to what men would understand, and that up to the time when the epic product was finally fixed. In particular, the epic was sung at the banquets of "princes," feudal knights of the soil. The banquet occasion undoubtedly tended to make it less serious, more picturesque, more free in its treatment of religion; and its conception of human life was profoundly influenced by the life and standards of those whose tastes the bards sought to satisfy. It was this poetry of the feudal banquet hall which was shaping and universalizing religious belief, not to say religious practice, all through the Greek middle ages.

Some account of the Homeric conceptions of the gods and of religious practice has already been given for the very reason that these poetic conceptions were real forces determining later religious history.[1] In referring to them again it is my purpose to point more in detail the influence of epic poetry in the process by which these conceptions were shaped.

(1) The gods of Homer, those superhuman persons whose agency men constantly feel, are conceived in human moulds. In

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 139 f.

form, in thought and feeling, in the modes of their activity, they are simply greater men; even the limitations of space and time are felt by the gods only less than by men. Men do not live in a world of mechanical cause and effect, a world under natural law; rather, what they do not themselves cause, is caused by the gods, and what the gods cause is accomplished in a manner all but human. Such a belief involves a multiplicity of gods, yet the important gods of the epic are very few; Zeus, Apollo, and Athena take the first rank, then come Poseidon and Hera; Hephaestus, Ares, Aphrodite, and many others, are in the background.

In contrast with such gods, the gods of worship had been and continued to be more or less vague *powers*, limited to the region where they were worshipped and without a sharply defined function to which their activity was confined. The poets who made the greater gods actors in the story limited their functions at the same time that they entirely removed them from any definite local sphere. It has been said that in depicting the character of the gods the epic poets performed a greater task than in depicting the character of men. It was a double task, to emphasize the human nature of the gods, as it were to bring them down from heaven to earth, and to give them individual character and personality. In the action of the poems, in the development of the relation of the gods to each other and to particular men, this character and personality found expression. The nature of the audience and the aims of the poet determined the character of the gods.[1] The bickerings of the gods, their intrigues among themselves, their care for their favorite heroes — the lameness of Hephaestus, the efforts of Hera and Poseidon to deceive Zeus, the wounding of Aphrodite by Diomedes, the overthrow of the impetuous Ares on the battlefield — would amuse an after-dinner audience. Yet though such gods inspired far less awe, though their régime was on the whole made rather comfortable for man, there were elements of progress along with elements of decline. Under the influence of the epic, the gods of worship came to be

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 140 f.

regarded as more universal in their reach and far more human in their nature; that the gods could sympathize with men, is a belief due in large measure to the epic.

In a word, the early bards found some gods, more widely recognized than others, about whom simple stories or myths had long been gathering; these they detached entirely from worship to make them *dramatis personae*. The character of the epic god-heroes was shaped to gratify and amuse the banquet audiences of feudal "princes," on the principle that gods are made in the image of man. Both the wonderful charm of the poetry and the humanity of these divine beings made the epic a determining factor for later belief in the gods.

(2) *Worship.* — If the principle of survival deserves any credence, the variety of local worship in later times indicates that the Homeric picture of the banquet sacrifice, libation, and prayer is anything but a complete picture of worship at any one period or locality. The most important feature of local worship, the recurring festival, is mentioned two or three times, but plays no part in the poems. Instead of numerous forms of sacrifice with different intent, never twice exactly alike at different shrines, epic sacrifice is reduced to one simple pattern. The knights of the *Iliad* sacrifice cattle, the suitors of the *Odyssey* cattle or sheep, the swineherd pigs, whenever flesh is wanted for eating: the animal is consecrated to the gods and thigh pieces are burned on the altar with libation and prayers; the very language of the description is stereotyped as though the whole matter had been fixed early in the history of epic poetry. The libation of wine as a form of worship, both at the banquet and at other times in connection with prayer, is the simplest possible material recognition of the gods. Its meaning for the epic is as simple as its form; the gods get a share of man's delight in the wine; the revenue tax thus paid, man may drink without fear. Ordinary sacrifice may similarly be regarded as a tax[1] which insures to man his enjoyment of the remainder, for epic gods have much in common with human

[1] Cp. Introduction, p. 36 f.; Keller, *Homeric Society*, 124 f.

rulers. Extra sacrifices might serve to pacify an angry god, or to insure the favor of the gods for some undertaking in the future. Yet even in the epic the gods are somewhat more than human rulers; the sense of awe and the desire for communion are not wholly absent; and in so far as Zeus or Apollo or Athena is a god, sacrifice is more than the payment of a tax. Moreover the other forms of worship, which may be traced back, some of them to the seventh century B.C., have little or nothing to do with this idea of a divine tax on human possessions and pleasures. We may conclude that the Homeric banquet-sacrifice and libation are selected from various forms of worship and brought into line with the other religious conceptions of the epic.

Turning to prayer, with related vows and oaths, we find the conception of the divine ruler very frankly recognized. At the same time we may fairly ask whether the connection of the individual with the god to whom he prays is not represented as something more intimate than that between subject and king. There is no question that the intimacy of this relation is emphasized in many forms of actual worship.

Granted that the epic drew its material from existing religious practice, along what lines was this material modified? In the first place, anything like magic or mysticism was omitted from the clear rational atmosphere of the poet's world. That Athena could make Odysseus now old, now young in appearance by a touch of her wand is not magic, but divine power. The changes of Proteus and the magic power of Circe belong to semidivine beings outside the proper home of epic heroes. Either the audience or the bards, or both, tended to hold a rationalistic view of the lower religious practices of the people; the Olympian gods were exalted at the expense of any worship which they could not absorb. Secondly, the bards chose simple forms of worship which would be universally intelligible to the neglect of all that was local and peculiar. In fact, the more religious side of local worship would often be passed over in the interest of that more simple, more splendid Olympian world. The motive which led to this

principle of selection was the necessity that poems sung from place to place should appeal to many different audiences. Thirdly, the choice of the banquet-sacrifice was most natural in the case of poems sung to gratify those who had gathered for a banquet. In this way religious worship was brought into closest harmony with the mood of the hearers. Finally, it should be noted that the meaning of worship is interpreted in connection with the meaning assigned to the Olympian gods. Sacrifice and prayer are offered in most instances to Zeus, who is supreme. The gods are universal and worship is of a universal type, though wherever the gods have favorite haunts there are local centres of worship. The gods are divine rulers meeting to feast with Zeus, as human princes met to feast with Menelaus at Sparta or with Agamemnon before Troy; worship is conceived as homage paid to divine rulers. The happy life of the gods is reflected in the joyousness of worship. The rites of riddance, practised to drive away evil or dangerous spirits, could find no recognition in a world wholly under the rule of these beneficent gods.

(3) The same principle may be more briefly stated in the case of divination. In a world where all that occurs is the direct act of the gods, peculiar occurrences will be regarded as having peculiar significance, while the ordinary course of events will reveal the purposes of the gods. Dreams all come from the gods, false dreams through the ivory gate, true dreams through the gate of horn.[1] Chance words or the casting of lots are determined by the gods. Special emphasis is laid on the phenomena of the heavens, thunder, lightning, etc., and on the flight of birds, for these belong to the sphere of the gods, out of human reach. In a world where gods care especially for individuals, the interpretation of signs depends on men to whom the gods have granted this peculiar gift. There is abundant evidence that in these matters the epic poets invented nothing, although they selected material adapted to their purposes, and interpreted it in connection with their scheme of the universe.

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 51.

(4) The conception of death, burial, and the world of souls in the epic has received most divergent interpretations.[1] Why was cremation practised more than burial? Why were souls mere shades, safe in Hades, when before and after Homer the spirits of the dead were worshipped? The traces of an earlier worship of the dead are found in some of the rites of burial and in a few scattered allusions. The practice of cremation undoubtedly favored the idea that the souls were finally laid to rest in a world cut off from living man. Perhaps the feudal princes of the poet's audience had lost a vivid belief in the power of souls to bless or curse. In any case the tendency of the epic to neglect every form of worship which did not assimilate with the rational worship of Olympian rulers came into play at this point. Over against ghost-gods of the people were set Olympian gods fit for princes to worship, and the whole influence of epic poetry was exerted in favor of the latter.[2]

As to the general character of this epic picture of religion, very different views have been expressed. Considering the large number of animals offered in sacrifice, a recent writer[3] finds the Homeric Greeks "an intensely religious people, by their whole philosophy of life committed to the constant service of the supernatural powers." At first sight the light manner of treating the gods and the emphasis on their foibles would lead to a view directly opposite to this. The two standpoints are in a manner reconciled by assuming that the early Greeks were sincerely devoted to the worship of their gods, but that the gods of the epic, detached entirely from local centres of worship, were handled by the poets with the utmost freedom. The conception of worship is exceedingly simple and direct. Men are in the hands of the gods; the gods, like greater human rulers, love the festal meal and delight in the gifts men bring. The effort of men to adapt themselves to the rule of such gods is on the whole successful. With all the sad-

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 168 f.

[2] Cp. "The Homeric View of the Future Life" in *Am. Jour. Theol.* 1 (1897) 741 f.

[3] Keller, *Homeric Society*, 138; Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 134.

ness inevitable to human life, religion is no added burden; the religion of the epic shares the epic atmosphere of social pleasure, and successful human activity; it belongs with the banquet hall in which the epic was sung.

During the Greek "middle ages" the influence of the epic conception of religion produced very different results according to the nature of each local worship. Wherever the epic came in contact with a worship at all in harmony with its own views, that worship was brought within the sphere of its positive influence. Heaven-gods were identified with Zeus more widely than before, sea-gods with Poseidon, flock-gods with Apollo. The communion meal tended to be more like the banquets of Menelaus and Alcinous. Seers of the Calchas type found their power increased, and more weight was attached to omens in the sky. We must believe that everywhere the epic helped to make religion more beautiful and more reasonable; particularly in the developing worship of the new Greek cities the epic religion found an opportunity to mould religious belief and practice in harmony with these ideals.

In the case of worship which was out of line with these conceptions, the effect of the epic was more various. Miss Harrison[1] has pointed out specific instances, such as the worship of Zeus in the Diasia, where some earlier, cruder worship has been connected with the Olympian gods or overlaid with a new type of worship which is in harmony with the nature of these gods. It would be idle to deny the influence of the epic in producing this result. Again, we find from later sources that various forms of magic were practised by the Greeks. These cannot all be explained as importations; rather they belong to this people as to every people. By omitting references to lower magic, the epic tended to check the practice of magic; by bringing the world completely under the sway of its human gods, it tended to destroy that whole philosophy of life which is presupposed by magic rites. Its religion was a rational one, tending in the direction of an "Aufklärung" for poet and hearer.

[1] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 12 f.

There remained, however, many rites and practices which it could not harmonize with its ideals, or check by its ban. It is to this fact that I would refer the twofold nature of later Greek worship. The distinction between the communion meal and the various rites known as purificatory or piacular has already been emphasized as a fundamental principle for the student of Greek religion. But while the first form is one comparatively uniform type, the second varies somewhat with the locality, the god or hero to whom it is offered, and the purpose in view. The epic tended to reduce the worship of its gods to the type of sacrifice which it had selected; at the same time it emphasized the antithesis between these gods and the local gods (including heroes), and helped to make the distinction between the communion meal sacrifice to Olympian rulers and all other worship. Piacular sacrifice to gods easily angered, purificatory rites, the worship of heroes, the worship of the dead, the "mysteries," were bound to persist, but they persisted as a ritual over against the regular worship of the national gods; only in exceptional instances did they hold a place in the worship of Zeus or Apollo. The effect of the epic was to emphasize this contrast.

**3. The Theogony of Hesiod.** — An examination of the poetry which has come down under the name of Hesiod only confirms the above account of religion in this period.[1] From the poems we learn that the father of Hesiod had moved from Cyme in Asia Minor to Ascra in Boeotia, where his son tended the flocks till he received the bard's laurel branch from the Muses themselves. The connection with Asia Minor explains the epic form of the poems, while the new environment accounts for the different world which they reveal. Peasants take the place of princes, the poems move on the plane of fact rather than fancy, homely adage and moral tale replace dramatic narrative. The crossing of religious influences in Boeotia perhaps explains reflections on such a theme as the families of the gods.

How much does Hesiod find, and how much does he invent?

[1] The poems of Hesiod are ordinarily assigned to the eighth century B.C.

It is probable that the idea of a theogony is a primitive factor in Greek religion, as in early religion elsewhere. The superstition as to lucky days belongs to the common life of the Boeotian peasant; no doubt practical rules and moral adages come from the same source; it has been shown[1] that the account of the five ages rests on an ancestor worship still practised in Boeotia in a much later period; the place assigned to Eros in the cosmogony cannot be wholly independent of the worship of Eros in Thespiae, not far from Ascra. Whether such "episodes" as the account of five ages, of Pandora, of Typhoeus, can be traced back to earlier hymns, is not an all-important question for religious history. These sections, loosely joined to the poem, are not invented by the poet; they contain old material which had not yet passed out of the sphere of popular belief.

The work of Hesiod (or of the Hesiodic school) is seen in the effort to harmonize the account of the gods in a consistent system. For the first time myth was treated in a critical spirit; what did not fit the system was rejected, and abstract ideas were introduced to fill out the system. Old tradition furnished the scheme of the family as the basis. The progressive organization of the physical world, broken by physical "catastrophes" such as earthquakes, is a principle which finds expression in the successive generations of the gods and in the conflicts of the gods (Cronus-Uranus, Zeus-Cronus, gods-giants). The other main principle is moral, in that the order which gradually prevails is a moral order; the Erinyes punish crime, countless "watchers" are on the lookout to detect evil, Wisdom and Justice (Metis and Themis) are the first wives of Zeus. In spite of the moral degeneration of mankind as the ages advance, the reign of law and reason has been making progress in the person of the gods.

The gods of Hesiod are of much the same type as those of Homer, gods detached from worship and assigned some definite function in a universal divine world. Perhaps the sacred days should be regarded as a part of local worship, though in general

[1] Rohde, *Psyche*, 85 f.

what is purely local in story or ritual is passed by in silence. Demeter and Dionysus of the peasant faith are beginning to claim recognition in the Olympian world. Yet these same Olympian divinities are simpler here, and more abstract in their nature. The brief myth-scenes give no such scope for developing the personality of the divine actors as does the dramatic story of the epic. Genuine myth finds a much larger place than in Homer; as the epic helped to make the gods genuine persons, so the Theogony of Hesiod became a sort of code of Greek myths. The relation of the gods as defined by Hesiod was the norm of local story and the basis on which later theogonies were constructed. The testimony of Hesiodic poetry indicates (1) that Boeotian cults were quite generally "Olympian," (2) that the worship of heroes or ancestors was important, and (3) that other forms of worship, the existence of which we must assume, might safely be neglected by the poets.

# CHAPTER III

## RELIGION IN THE SEVENTH AND SIXTH CENTURIES B.C.

**1. Social and Political Changes; Literature.** — Though the political and the social development of Greece continue without marked change through the eighth and the seventh centuries, and the epoch now to be considered shows only the fruition of influences already at work, a striking change in religion makes this from our standpoint a distinct epoch. The seventh century was characterized by a great religious revival; Dionysus won a place among the Olympian deities; rites of popular worship were imbued with spiritual meaning and gained new importance; the Orphic movement arose in the effort to satisfy a new sense of religious need.

The connection of Greece with the Mediterranean world along trade routes became still more important than during the preceding centuries. The introduction of coined money about 700 B.C. greatly facilitated the development of commerce, bringing in its train results good and evil. Manufacture and export were no longer limited to a few centres; slave labor proved the most economical method of production, and slaves the most valuable objects imported into Greece; a trade aristocracy with ideals formed in trade arose to compete with the aristocracy of birth. To a poet of the old order like Theognis the love of money seemed the root of all the evils about him, the insolence of "upstarts," the absence of the sense of honor, the disregard of all that made life beautiful. Moreover, social barriers were giving way to an individual opportunity to rise or fall; as the gifted man might rise to unaccustomed power, so the masses might fall into debt and a poverty never known before.

It was in this epoch that the city became the centre of Greek life, and the power controlling a large surrounding territory. These city-states have armies of heavy-armed soldiers instead of bands of retainers led by knights; they are developing navies to protect their commerce. The aristocracy which had quite generally thrown the king into the background is brought into conflict with the new leaders of commerce and with the masses. One of the first results of the new conditions was the demand for a uniform administration of justice which led to codified laws. When the conflict of classes became acute, some individual, often one of the aristocracy, might make himself a leader of the people and rule as a tyrant. The word "tyrant" means simply that his power was unconstitutional. It might be used to beautify the city with temples and sculpture, to advance its commerce by improving the roads and developing a merchant marine, to introduce such public improvements as a good water-supply, to furnish the people with festivals and games for their amusement, to establish order and justice in the state. Or, along with the material splendor he introduced, the tyrant might rule with iron rod for the gain of none but himself. Wherever it appeared, the tyranny left its mark on religion.

The establishment of colonies in the east and in the west continued in the seventh century. Wherever trade routes opened the way to some inviting region, whenever there were bold leaders (perhaps nobles disappointed in their schemes at home) and adventurous spirits to follow, a colony was established. At this time the oracle at Delphi had become the power that suggested the foundation of colonies and directed their leaders. The cessation of this movement in the sixth century is more difficult to explain than its origin, though no doubt the development of larger states at home, and the crystallization of society along more definite lines, tended to check it.

The most important result of these political and economic changes for the history of religion was the new importance of the individual citizen. The sense of personality was beginning

to develop; with it came the sense of a personal religious need which did not appear in the epic, and which the epic type of worship did not satisfy. The rise of lyric poetry and of philosophy was also conditioned by the recognition of a personality over against society and not absolutely bound by social tradition. That the recital of the epic was transferred from the homes of a feudal aristocracy to the market-place and an audience of the people, was a direct result of the changed conditions. A state made up of many citizens had replaced the group of a few knights led by a king and attended by their retainers, and all the splendor which might have attended a court was lavished on the city, its temples, and its public service of the gods.

It is in the literature of the period that these influences are most clearly seen. The so-called Homeric hymns are probably prooemiums with which the rhapsode began his recital of the epic at public festivals of the gods. The occasion explains both the choice of some local story, such as the birth of Apollo, and the pan-Hellenic form in which that story is cast. It explains, too, the tone of serene joy which marks the hymns; they reflect both the calm dignity of the gods and the cheerfulness of the festival scene of which they form a part. These gods are still the gods of Homer, human, universal, "of easy life," but in the environment of worship a very different side to their character is brought to the front. The picture of local worship — for example, the worship of Demeter at Eleusis — makes these hymns most important to students of Greek religion.

In lyric poetry the Greek genius first began to break free from a religious theme. The stern elegies of Callinus and Tyrtaeus praise the soldier's valor and the soldier's death. But elegy was better adapted to moral and political subjects than to war. Tyrtaeus sought by his poetry to introduce order into turbulent Sparta, on the ground that the gods who founded the city should be honored there; faith in gods who protected the righteous and punished sin, especially the faith in Athena who watched over Athens, inspired Solon to introduce into the city a new social order;

with all his sense of injustice among men, Theognis did not lose belief in the righteous rule of Zeus, nor was religious ritual outside the pale of his moral teaching. The light raillery and satire of iambic poetry does not dwell on religious themes, though it was intimately connected with carnival practices in the peasant worship of Demeter. In the melic poetry of Ionia only the gods of wine and of love are celebrated; but occasionally, as in the perfect hymn of Sappho to Aphrodite, the poet touches deep springs of religious feeling. Yet even for lyric poetry religion offered the highest themes. The passion of Archilochus found its lasting expression in hymns to Demeter and Heracles and Dionysus; the story of Apollo was the worthiest theme for the muse of Alcaeus; while the later Dorian lyric became the handmaid of religion. Its choral hymns, paeans to Apollo, cyclic dithyrambs to Dionysus, parthenia to the gods of youth, prosodia (processionals) for the temple ritual, all but supplanted the cruder forms of liturgy in the worship at many temples. As epic poetry had given the gods human passions and human sympathies, as the sculptor and the architect were consecrating their skill to beautify the environment of worship, so the choral lyric gave rich poetic form to the very ritual itself.

The one discordant note in the lyric poetry of the sixth century is found not in the light touch of Hipponax, but in the elegies of that bold religious critic Xenophanes. It was true religious feeling which prompted him to sing, "God is one, supreme among gods and men, not like mortals in body or in mind"; "but if cattle or lions had hands, so as to paint with their hands and produce works of art as men do, they would paint their gods and give them bodies in form like their own, horses like horses, cattle like cattle." Just at the end of the sixth century the mythical account of the gods began to be criticised in a less radical way by Stesichorus. This "arranger of choruses" rewrote the old stories of the gods in his hymns. The introduction of moral motives into the story of Agamemnon and Orestes was due to him; he made Heracles a moral hero, the much-enduring opponent of evil; he held that

Artemis threw a stagskin over Actaeon instead of transforming him into a stag. From the same standpoint he criticised the conduct of Helen in going to Troy with Paris, but when he was stricken with blindness, he wrote a palinode retracting his statements. While Homer had made the gods actors in the epic drama, and Hesiod had felt free to fit them into his system of origins, now for the first time in literature the gods are tested by religious and moral standards, only to be found wanting.

First on the coast of Asia Minor, then in southern Italy, the sixth century saw the beginning of Greek philosophy. The phrase "all things are full of gods" is attributed to Thales, but these gods are not the Apollo or Aphrodite of popular belief. The question "what is reality?" does not lead to a religious answer until it has been asked for two centuries. Reality is water, or air, or fire; natural causes are found for the phenomena of earth and sky; as compared with this reality and these causes, the gods of Olympus are reduced to a subordinate position. Heracleitus (*frag.* 67, 97, 98) accepts the epic kinship of gods and men in its larger significance. The people do not know what gods or heroes are (*frag.* 130); divine images can no more hear prayer than can the walls of a house; bacchanalian rites (*frag.* 124, 127), mourning for the death of gods (*frag.* 130 *a*), purifications with blood (*frag.* 130),— these he boldly attacks as examples of human stupidity; yet he would find in religion "cures" for the soul (*frag.* 129); in a word he recognizes something divine in the order of the universe, and he believes that there are divinities who watch over men. Of Pythagoras I shall speak in connection with the Orphic movement. The successors of these early thinkers in the fifth century preserved the same attitude toward religion, either neglecting it or criticising its errors in the effort to reach its truth. For the period now under consideration, that sixth century which was most prolific in new ideas, philosophy obtained so little influence that it provoked no real opposition from priest or statesman.

**2. Changes in Belief and Worship.** — The influence of the epic, tending to reduce the gods of local worship to its universal, super-

human type, continued down through the seventh and sixth centuries; during this epoch its quiet power became dominant, especially in the worship of the growing cities, and its work was in a sense completed. The rude symbols which often had marked the presence of a divinity began to be replaced with carved images in human form, or the sacred pillar was draped

FIG. 69. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Kylix by Hieron, Berlin)

Maenads are dancing before an altar and a draped pillar with Dionysus mask (herm).

with garments and hung with a mask representing the human face; for only the human form adequately symbolized these gods. Shrines and groves no longer sufficed as houses for the gods, but temples must be built in their honor. Even in the votive offerings it is perhaps possible to detect evidences of more definite anthropomorphism. The epic names which stood for the universal factor in the nature of each local god in some measure supplanted the old "epithet" names of worship. Even the

chthonic deities and the heroes of local worship were endowed with at least a nominal universality.

It is not enough to say that the gods were more generally conceived in definite human form; their character became a more perfect expression of human ideals. All that was beautiful and passionate in human love was embodied in Aphrodite. Zeus the ruler was endowed with all wisdom and justice. Moral as well as ritual purity belonged to Apollo and guided the responses of his Delphic oracle, till at length the sunlight was the best expression of his nature. The new devotion to the state, the virtue of patriotism, was freely attributed to the patron deity of each state. Indeed, the conception of divinity as the ideal of justice and morality began already in this epoch to destroy the distinct personality which made each god a separate being.

The rising spirit of reflection could not avoid the question of a theodicy. In the earlier lyric poetry political and social confusion led to many pessimistic expressions; Mimnermus had felt that the evils of life more than balanced the good, and Theognis had said much of the prevalent injustice; yet the same Theognis kept a firm faith in the ultimate righteousness of the divine rule. This faith was based on the general run of events, while apparent exceptions were explained as due to a delay of punishment. In an age of expansion and change the moralist preached the Greek virtue of moderation; the cardinal sin was the effort to overstep the limits of human life which the gods had prescribed; overbearing conduct (ὕβρις) was punished, contentment with what the gods sent was the source of happiness. The identification of the world-order with the rule of the gods had begun in the epic. But while in the epic events are referred to the personal will of the gods, in lyric poetry they are referred to that moral order which is called by Solon (*e.g. frag.* 4. 9) and Archilochus "the gods" (*frag.* 55. 5; 29; 33), by Semonides "god" (*frag.* 1. 5), by Callinus "fate" (*frag.* 1. 9 and 12). Where it is assigned to any one god, naturally that god is Zeus (Terpander, *frag.* 1; Mimnermus, *frag.* 2 and 5; Archilochus, *frag.* 6). From this standpoint

Athena is an agent fulfilling the will of Zeus (Solon, *frag.* 13. 1–4), Apollo is the mouthpiece of Zeus; in a word, the conception of a world-order inevitably tends to undermine the individual personality of the gods. The criticism of popular belief by Xenophanes and Stesichorus has already been mentioned. From this time on the discrepancy between moral and religious ideals on the one hand, ritual and popular belief on the other, cuts at the very root of Greek religion.

But while criticism of the gods from the standpoint of religion and morals as yet affected only the few, a more widespread sense of lack in the religion of the old Olympian gods was due to their increasing separation from everyday life. As ideal beings who belonged in the heavens, gods untouched by the sorrows and sins of humanity, they were praised by the poets and pictured by the artist; the splendid ritual of their worship served admirably as a state religion; but the very perfection of such gods made it impossible for them to meet the actual needs of the individual. Even though Athena gave her people the olive and blessed the crafts of potter and weaver, she did not fully meet their needs. The increasing worship of local heroes was, like the worship of the Christian saints, an appeal to gods on whose sympathy the worshipper could reckon. The same demand for gods not too far off from men was one reason, along with others to be considered later, for the rapid growth of Demeter and Dionysus worship. The gods of corn and wine, even when they were included among the Olympian deities, did not lose their hold on human life.

If now we turn from the gods to the consideration of worship, the increasing control of worship by the state, and the adaptation of worship to the needs of the state, is significant. For the early tribes who penetrated southward into Greece, the religious group and the political group were practically identical. But the crossing of religious influences, together with the mingling of races in the "middle ages," tended to make the group of those who worshipped at any one shrine independent of the state.

Only the rise of the cities and of larger states centring in cities made possible a union of "church and state" again. The controlling power in each city brought one cult after another under the supervision of the city, as much to secure the stability of the city by divine blessing, as much to gratify the people by splendid festivals, as from any direct interest in the cults themselves. The adoption by the city of cults hitherto private was the first step toward the nationalization of worship.

The second step was the erection of temples and of statues in the temples. Even in the sixth century, the substitution of statues in human form for "fetiches" and sacred pillars was not unusual. But perhaps the use of decorative painting and relief to represent the gods was more common, in that it depicted the gods in visible form without interfering with old symbols. Certainly the temple was older than the temple statue; in other words elaborate structures as dwelling places for the gods supplanted the shrines in which a fetich symbol might be kept, even before human art had the courage to make a statue of the god in his dwelling. The wealth of the city, which in Mycenaean days had been lavished on the palace and its fortified surroundings, was now devoted to splendid edifices for the city's divine lords. A tyrant like Peisistratus gave the people both occupation and a pride in what he had done for their city, by erecting stone temples to Athena and Dionysus and other gods. The importance of religion as a state institution is indicated by the fact that temples were the first public buildings to be built in enduring form.

With the erection of temples by the city-state there came the adoption and transformation of religious festivals.[1] Up to this time ritual had been comparatively simple, and local shrines too poor to make the worship rich or impressive. It remained for a Peisistratus to use the wealth of Athens in enriching the festivals which came under the direction of the state. Splendid processions and elaborate sacrifices at the expense of the state

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 112.

made the worship of the gods a worthy expression of the state's devotion to them; trained choruses of singers performed the liturgy of worship; at the Panathenaea athletic contests and the recital of poetry provided entertainment for all the people. The final triumph of the Olympian gods came now when they were worshipped by the state to secure their blessings for the state.

At this same time a pan-Hellenic worship rose to prominence, for Apollo and Zeus were universal Greek gods. Athletic contests, which once had been celebrated at funerals of kings and nobles, now became a possession of the people. In local festivals, but especially in the great festivals at Delphi (to Apollo), at the Isthmus of Corinth (to Poseidon), at Nemea and Olympia (to Zeus), these contests were a real form of worship to gods of all Greece. It was the oracle at Delphi, however, which proved its right to be called the religious centre of Greece. Its guidance for colonies was held to be essential; changes in ritual or worship, as well as changes in government, were ratified by it; in particular the development of local worship and the new demand for purification were directed by Apollo.[1] With the victory of Apollo over that old nature god, later identified with Dionysus, whose tomb was marked by a mound (the *omphalos*) in the temple precinct, the triumph of those ideals for which Apollo stood was assured for Greek religion.

One of the most patent influences of the Delphic oracle had to do with rites of purification. The Homeric poems have nothing to say about the taint of sin or the need of purification from evil; according to the later epics, however, Achilles who slew Thersites, the daughters of Danaus, Heracles, all who have shed blood, need to be purified. It may be that the social confusion and consequent misery of the period under discussion helped to develop the sense of divine displeasure with evil, along with the belief that the gods demanded purity. Certainly we find a deep-rooted belief that the soul of the dead man pursued his murderer

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 60 f.

in relentless anger until it had been appeased. Further, the reign of divine justice was seen in the fact that the taint of blood brought upon a community the anger of the gods. The laws by which Greek states at this period controlled vengeance by relatives of the murdered man are based on the double belief in the anger of the murdered man's soul and in the anger of gods. Even in case the relatives were satisfied, it was necessary for the murderer to appease the soul of the dead, and for the community to purify itself from evil. It was through the Delphic Apollo that the demand for purification was developed and directed. In his worship men imitated the rites of purification which, they believed, the god himself had originally performed after killing even such an evil monster as the Python; for the purity of the god must be unsullied, the standard for the purity he demanded of men. The character of the rites, the shedding of blood to appease the angry soul and the piacular sacrifices to the gods, have been discussed above.[1]

Perhaps the purifications in the worship of agricultural deities are the same in principle, rites to remove any possible taint of evil which might lead these gods to destroy the crops. With the rise of other forms of peasant worship these rites come into prominence: at Athens the Diasia of Zeus, the Thargelia of Apollo, the Skirophoria of Athena include worship to ward off the possible anger of the gods by means of purificatory rites.

**3. The Rise of Dionysus Worship.** — The most striking feature of religious history in this epoch finds its explanation in the new prominence of peasant worship, to which reference has just been made. The worship of the state, however rich and beautiful, did not satisfy the needs of the individual; he turned to foreign forms of worship and to the cruder, simpler worship of the peasant. The gods who live and work in nature, who suffer as man suffers and give him joy in their joy, whose worship is concerned with the plough and the sickle, Demeter and Dionysus, tend to supplant the serene spirits of Olympus in the real religion of the seventh

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 105 f.

and sixth centuries. Demeter, the grain goddess, made good her right to be classed with the other Olympian gods, while her worship retained the same mystic forms which made it potent in causing the grain to sprout. Dionysus, however, was the god about whom the great religious revival centred, Dionysus the twice-born, for in a Thracian god the Greeks recognized that same spirit of plant-life and of the vine which was worshipped in winter and spring by their own farming class.

The evidence that Dionysus was a foreign god is found in the myths of his coming to Greece, in the fact that from Homer on he was associated with Thrace, and in the fundamental difference between his worship and that of the other Olympian gods.[1] In Thrace the prototype of the Greek Dionysus was the chief divinity; Sabazius was one of his names, perhaps Dionysus was another. His worship was of a distinctly orgiastic character. Groups of his worshippers, mainly women, found their way at night with torches into wild glens on the mountains; the music of drums and cymbals and flutes stirred sensitive spirits till their whirling dances and wild summons to the god induced a religious frenzy; serpents were fondled, the young of wild animals were now suckled by human mothers, now torn in pieces and eaten raw. The fawn-skin garment, the wand tipped with a fir cone and wreathed in ivy, sometimes horns attached to the head, recalled the god to whose service they were devoted. What was the purpose of these wild practices, ending in dizziness and exhaustion? The habit of calling the worshippers by the name of the god, Saboi (Sabazius), Bassaroi (Bassareus), Bakchoi (Bakchos), indicates the primary purpose, namely, the identification of the worshippers and the god. The wilder the frenzy, the more the worshipper felt himself free from the restraints of the body and the restraints of the material world. The goal of religion, the oneness of the man himself (the soul) with the divine being, was here realized in its crudest form. Under the "inspiration" of frenzy men saw what

[1] Cp. Rapp, *Die Beziehungen des Dionysoskultus zu Thrakien und Kleinasien*, 1882; and the article by Voigt in Roscher's *Lexikon*.

the god saw and prophesied the words of the god. The man who had experienced a union with the god could not but believe that his soul was of divine stuff and therefore immortal. The ultimate purpose of the worship, however, is perhaps to be found in the nature of the god. By wild rites of similar character the peoples of northern Europe wakened the dormant spirits and made the seeds sprout; their frenzied dances quickened the life of vegetation by "sympathetic magic."[1] Dionysus also was a god of life in plants and animals, a god akin to the spirits of vegetable life. The wild worship resulted in an epiphany of the god, either a return to herald the spring, or a new birth of the god, who was himself the spirit of life.

All this orgiastic worship was most foreign to the Olympian religion of the Greek state, and to all the ideals of life which we associate with Greece. Yet there are traces enough in Greek religion of the influence of the processes in nature, traces enough that the spirit of life in vegetation and animals was recognized by the Greek as divine. Thracian tribes who had gained a footing on Olympus and Helicon and Parnassus had long since made the inhabitants of central Greece familiar with their god. It has been suggested that the Delphic oracle first belonged to the spirit of vegetation who was wakened to birth in the spring by orgiastic rites on the mountain peak above, and whose grave was in the sanctuary itself. The coming of the Thracian god was not the introduction of a religion wholly new; his worship appealed to a range of ideas belonging to all the European races, Greeks included, however much Olympian ideals had thrown these conceptions into the background; and the god himself was not unknown in central Greece.

The stories of Dionysus, almost all of them, have to do with the coming of the god to Greece. Sometimes he was graciously received, as by Icarus in Attica; more often his strange nature and strange companions provoked opposition. In both cases there occurred some evidence of the god's dread power in an

[1] Mannhardt, *Wald und Feldkulte*, 1875, Part I.

outbreak of madness; Icarus who welcomed him was slain by his people, his daughter hung herself in grief, and an epidemic of suicide followed among the women; Pentheus who opposed him fell a victim to the women who joined in this worship, women led by his own mother. The opposition was due to the wildness of his worship; the welcome, to his gift of the vine. In both instances, however, the coming is described as the home-coming of a god not unknown to the Greeks.

The facts of the rapidly increasing worship and the myths of his coming to Greece can only be interpreted as due to a great revival of religion in which a wave of influence from the north swept down over Greece. The vase-paintings of the sixth century and the poetry in praise of wine confirm this interpretation. The Dionysus of the revival was the old spirit of vegetable life, incarnate in the bull, incarnate in the wine. No doubt intoxicants helped the frenzy of his Thracian worshippers; for the Greeks wine was the very essence of the god, the immediate occasion of a divine frenzy in men.

The later religious history of Europe presents more than one parallel to the Dionysus revival, which spread from village to village as divine madness seized the people, which broke all the bonds of social convention, and overcame the bitterest opposition, until the new god had made good his place on Olympus. The inspired madness of his worshippers gave to Greek as to Thracian divine "visions," and for a time sibyls and similar prophets were common in Greece. Greek, as well as Thracian, learned the divinity and consequent immortality of the soul by his experience of union with Dionysus. Above all, the fact that religion was proved a genuine experience, something more than myth or liturgy, made this movement significant both for Greek religion and for Greek culture. One of its lasting results was the introduction of Iacchus (the youthful Dionysus) into the Eleusinian mysteries.

The first wave of impulse from the north at length spent its force; under the guidance of the Delphic Apollo, prophets like

Epimenides and Melampus modified the wilder practices; yet the essence of the movement remained to bear fruit in the Attic drama and in the philosophy of Plato.

**4. The Orphic Movement.** — Among the results of the revival of religion in a mystic form, one was so permanent and influential that it cannot be passed over; I refer to the Orphic sect. The Orphic writings have come down to us in an extremely late form, yet their influence on literature and philosophy can be traced back well into the sixth century B.C. From this influence we infer an Orphic sect consisting of communities which practised secret rites, an Orphic theology which early attracted the attention of philosophers, and Orphic apostles who sought to spread the new form of religion. Most of the great religions of the world have passed through a theological stage in which doctrine was fixed by the priests: the Orphic movement in Greece was a start in this direction, a start soon checked by political, social, and religious forces; yet the Orphic sect remained a power in Athens from the sixth century on.

While the Orphic communities or "churches" were at times definite groups of separatists who stood apart from the practices of the state religion, and the Orphic theology is known in a well-defined form, it is difficult to ascertain how much of mystic practice should be regarded as strictly Orphic. Apparently rites from Thrace, Phrygia, and Crete were adopted by the sect. The ideas which had been stimulated in the worship of Demeter and of Dionysus sought some adequate expression, and found it only in strange rites from outside. The source of these ideas also was referred to a foreigner, that sweet singer of the north, the Thracian Orpheus. Through this child of divine parentage they came as a revelation of divine truth. Yet the Orphic belief is clearly the product of an epoch, not of a man; and however much it was stimulated by foreign beliefs and modified by foreign practices, the great religious teachings of Orphism are a characteristic Greek product.

Although the Orphic theology was based on the work of Hesiod

and his successors, it transformed what it accepted from this source in accordance with two fundamental ideas: (1) the essential unity of the gods and the world in one divine being, and (2) the presence of this divine nature in the human soul. The form of the Orphic cosmogony was determined partly by the Hesiodic literature, partly by religious practice. The origin of the world is found in Chaos (space), Chronos (time), and Aether (fiery matter). From Chaos and Aether Chronos formed the world-egg, from which was born Protogonos or Phanes, the father and creator of the universe, a being identified with Dionysus (the life in the world) and with Metis (wisdom). Phanes was the father of Night and Heaven and Earth and the Gods, the creator of sun and moon, of men and animals. By the help of Night Zeus swallowed Phanes (as in Hesiod he swallowed Metis); thus he became the father of Athena, and thus also the nature of Phanes filled his entire being till he was the complete godhead. From Zeus and Persephone was born Dionysus-Zagreus, who as a child was made king of the world. But incited by the jealous Hera, the Titans beguiled the boy from his nurse with toys, tore him in pieces, and ate all but the heart, which was conveyed by Athena to Zeus. This heart Zeus brought to life again as Dionysus, the son of Semele, a god identical in nature with his father. The Titans who had eaten Dionysus-Zagreus were destroyed by the thunderbolt of Zeus and their ashes scattered over the world. These ashes were the source of the double nature of man, who was divine, for the life-power of Zagreus was in them; evil, for the Titans had destroyed Zagreus. Such was the fantastic form in which the Orphic literature expressed the thought that the world and man found their fundamental unity in the nature of god. "Zeus is head, Zeus the middle, of Zeus all things are fashioned;" but this Zeus was identical with Phanes and known to his worshippers as Dionysus.

Religious practice was determined by the nature of the soul. Through the ashes of the Titans man had in himself both the principle of evil and the divine nature; the divine and immortal

soul was bound in a body which was called now its prison, now its grave. It was the sad lot of man to suffer retribution after death for sins in this world, then to be reborn into this same world of sin and evil. But by the grace of Dionysus and Persephone, Orpheus, who himself saw the lower world, had taught men initiations by which the chain of rebirths might be broken and the soul might reach its true freedom with the gods. This goal demanded both the initiations and a life ritually pure; "many are wandbearers, few Bakchoi," for not many of the initiates succeeded in living up to the rules of purity.

The initiations, so far as we can learn, were rites adopted from

FIG. 70. — TERRA COTTA RELIEF FROM CAMPANIA

Scene of initiation in Dionysiac mysteries; the figure at the left carries the *liknon* or winnowing basket.

Crete, Asia Minor, in particular Phrygia, — rites savage in their origin but here filled with high spiritual meaning.[1] By eating the raw flesh of a bull the Cretans possessed themselves of the divine life which they believed was in the bull; so in Orphic initiations

[1] Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 479 f.

the revolting rite was revived to symbolize most vividly the union of the worshipper's soul with the god of all life. Clay and pitch were used to absorb the taint of evil from the body; the winnowing basket symbolized the winnowing of man's immortal nature from its physical husk; all contact with death was forbidden, even so that animal food was strictly abjured; for some ritual reason beans were tabooed, and woollen garments were not worn; moreover, there were special piacular rites to cover special dangers or difficulties. The pure life which should follow initiation was not so much the avoidance of moral evil, though this was included, as the avoidance of any ritual error; but the rules of avoidance never developed into a real asceticism in Greece.

Such a religion, preached by apostles and fostered in "churches," might on more favorable ground have developed into a power controlling social life by its priests and absorbing within itself every expression of religious instinct. But in Greece it remained a protestant religion. In the inner circle of its votaries at Athens and in southern Italy the doctrines and practices were kept up until the religion of Greece yielded to Christianity. Like every esoteric religion, it was profaned before the world by men who used its supernatural claims for their own gain; miracle-workers appealed to the imagination of the people, begging priests to their sympathy, self-styled officials to the desire for occult initiations. Such superstition found little sympathy from thinking men.[1] Yet we must believe that the permanence of Orphism was due to its truths, — (1) the belief that all existence finds its ground in one god, Dionysus-Zagreus, Zeus, or whatever name be used; (2) the belief in the divine nature of the soul, and (3) the practical principle that in the possibility of restoring the soul to union with the godhead is found the standard and goal of human life.

The relation of Pythagoras to the Orphic movement is not entirely clear. The second and third of the points just mentioned, the divine nature of the soul and the duty of developing in the soul its own divine nature, were part of the teaching of Pythagoras.

[1] Cp. *infra*, p. 271.

For Orphic pantheism it would seem that he substituted a philosophic conception of the world as controlled by number and harmony. In Croton he founded a community resembling the Orphic "churches," except that it sought to realize its ethico-religious ideals through an oligarchic state.

The doctrines of Pythagoras — the antithesis of the soul and body, the rebirth of the soul in a life determined by its past deeds, and the return of the soul to the gods as its ultimate goal — became the basis of a political constitution. Along with ethical demands (mainly negative in character), the avoidance of animal food, of beans, of woollen garments, etc., was imposed as the means of salvation. Although the personality of Pythagoras brought temporary success to this "rule of the saints," the political power of Pythagoreanism soon came to a disastrous end. The very appearance of such a movement, however, bears witness to the mystic spirit of the age.

# CHAPTER IV

## RELIGION IN THE FIFTH AND FOURTH CENTURIES, B.C.; HELLENISM AT ITS HEIGHT

**1. The Persian Wars and the Exaltation of the Athenian State.** — The same forces which had been at work in society during the sixth century were manifest with increasing clearness during the centuries that followed. The old aristocracy, except where it had been supplanted by an aristocracy of wealth, maintained itself as one party in each state. In Athens it was losing ground until in the overthrow of the thirty tyrants it met its deathblow; and in the fourth century Athens represents what a real democracy could accomplish on Greek soil. Long before the people had obtained undisputed control in the state, they had secured the just administration of law and full freedom of individual initiative. Meantime, commerce continued to gain in importance. With the growth of the Athenian empire the commercial supremacy of Athens was placed on such a firm basis that it was not broken by the Peloponnesian War; and for Athens commercial supremacy was the concomitant of intellectual supremacy.

At the end of the sixth century in Athens the state worship of the Olympian gods had been made rich and imposing by the Peisistratid rulers. These Athenian gods were closely united with the political power of the Athenian state; yet up to this time the cults of each locality had not been overpowered by the greater festivals of the city; and in the city of Athens, quite as much as in the surrounding country, the Orphic movement exercised a potent sway over the religious nature. For the period now to be considered Greek religion developed along three

lines; first one current of development, then another, came to the front as it was favored by social and intellectual conditions. With the growth of the first Athenian confederacy it was the state ideal of religion, the Olympian worship as expressing the religious ideal of the Greek state, which reached its highest development. Later the mystic religion, the religion of sentiment, was revived to meet a need which the state religion failed to satisfy. And thirdly, the philosophical phase of religion was developed among thinkers who first attempted to give a complete rational account of the universe. While these three currents are to be found in Athens all through this period, each one successively is the controlling element.

It has already been assumed that during this period the attention of the student will be focussed on Athens. The position of Athens as the central factor in Greek life is due, more than to any other one cause, to the fact that the resistance to the attack of Persia centred in Athens. It was Athens which had undertaken to help the Ionian colonies in Asia Minor against the great king, and, if we may trust our historians, the force of the Persian attack on Greece proper was levelled primarily at Athens. In the effort to meet this attack and repulse it, Athens became conscious of her position as the leading city in Greece. The very devastation of the city by Persia, followed as it was by political and material successes in the pan-Hellenic world, gave an opportunity for the best talents of the best Greek artists to rebuild this capital of Greece.

At the beginning of the fifth century poetry, music, sculpture and painting, philosophy, medicine, not to say religion, had reached a considerable degree of development, one in one local centre, another in another. But in the new capital of Greece first the arts and then the sciences were gradually absorbed. A poetry, a sculpture, an architecture that were truly Athenian were developed out of the best in each local centre, and in each of these lines Athens became the exponent of Greek progress. What was true of politics, of the arts, and of philosophy, was true also of religion, though in a somewhat less degree. Certainly it is safe to say that any progress which Greece made in the fifth century along re-

ligious lines was made at Athens, for here all the arts were devoted to the honor of the state through the state religion.

A second effect of the Persian wars was to increase wonderfully the importance of the Athenian state in the eyes of its citizens. Commerce for the time being was checked by the war; the conflicts of different parties and of different interests within the state were set aside by larger demands; among all the ideals which appealed to men the ideal of the free state was given a commanding position. The Athena and the Dionysus whose worship had been developed by the tyrants, now became exponents of the new conception of the state; while at the same time the organization of religion was once for all made subject to the political organization of the state.

One particular phase of this exaltation of the state and its interests deserves special mention. The most interesting development of religion at Athens during the preceding epoch had been the growth of Orphism. At the beginning of the fifth century B.C. a careful observer might have predicted that the growing power of Persia would absorb the Balkan peninsula as it had absorbed the Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor, and that under the overlordship of Persia the Orphic sect, supported by an alliance with Delphi, would bring Greek religion under priest control. That a church of mystics with their interest in a spiritual world should work in conjunction with an outside controlling political power is a phenomenon by no means unknown in the history of religion. But in Greece that same struggle which freed the Greek states from Persian menace furnished the antidote to the spread of organized mysticism. Thereafter no church ever threatened the supremacy of the state.

**2. The First Athenian Empire.** — During the fifty years which followed the battle of Salamis the political, social, and religious development of Athens was largely the evolution of those forces which had been set in motion by the Persian wars. The two important facts for the history of religion were (1) the supremacy of Athens, and (2) the ideal of the state which came to control

the Athenian conception of life. The first point may be dismissed with the remark that Athenian supremacy was fundamentally different from the hegemony of other states in the following century, for the reason that in Athens every phase of Hellenism found its highest and most characteristic expression. Moreover, when Greek sculpture became Athenian sculpture, it was an art dedicated to worship, to the creation of plastic ideals of the gods, and the ornamentation of buildings erected for these gods. The supremacy of Athens in literature, also, did not lie along secular lines. The great literary product of the period was the drama, and the drama was religious in its origin, in its themes, and in its performance. Nor is it enough to say that Athenian supremacy in literature and art was attained along religious lines. The political power and the military glory of the city were embodied in the goddess Athena; her temple was the treasury of the confederacy, and its greatness was best seen in her worship.

The second point, the development of the ideal of the state as such, was even more important in its influence on Greek religion. It is an interesting fact that on more than one Greek acropolis the palace of the Mycenaean ruler with its altar for the state worship had given place to the temple erected for its gods by the later state. In earlier times the king was the state; later the ruling power might be, now a group of nobles who owed their power to birth or wealth, now some tyrant who had succeeded in wresting control from the nobles. The conception that the state was the people, that devotion to the state was something more than loyalty to a man or to a ruling class, that political power was to be given by the people to the man of their choice — the conception of democracy — was the problem which at this time the Athenians were trying to solve. Though the leaders whom the people chose to follow were generally men from old families, the people constantly claimed more power for themselves. And with power there came responsibility; with the successful exercise of power the demands of the state on the individual were more widely recognized. The older devotion to a ruling person or

class, together with attachment to the locality where one lived, was merged at length in that loyalty to the state which we call patriotism. During this period the ideal of the state obtained such a hold on the Athenians that its influence outlived the overthrow of political power, the attacks of the Sophistic philosophy, and the spread of private luxury.

The successes of the Athenian state in this period did more than give the state ideal a lasting hold; they modified for the time being the general conception of life. Such an epoch with its large demands on men and its ready response to human effort, made life seem to be splendidly worth living. There was no opening for pessimism or mysticism or a philosophy which emphasized any other ideal than that of action. The life of to-day with its brightness, its wonderful opportunities, its quick rewards, left little time for thought of the past or meditation on the future. In the religion of the day we look to see the effect of optimistic activity in every line of social effort.

It has already been pointed out that the victories over Persia brought to an end the possibility that the Orphic phase of religion might become controlling in Greece. To sympathetic individuals its doctrines still appealed. But the development of literature and art and science was on the whole antagonistic to any form of mysticism. The state ideal found no answering harmony in the Orphic conception of life. More than anything else, the successful activity of the age made men insusceptible to such a phase of religion; something more tangible and more virile was demanded by these men of action. It is true that old forms of worship, some of them decidedly mystic in tone, were retained; but ordinarily they were brought into at least a formal connection with the Olympian religion of the state. Thus the worship of Demeter at Eleusis was made a state cult, and the usual forms of state worship were in some degree welded on to the older rites. Dionysus worship also was adopted by the state, when the Athenian drama had developed out of the earlier choruses in honor of the wine god. Moreover, it seems that the syncretism of the Orphic theology

left its mark on the Olympian divinities of the state. Though the personality of each god was distinct enough to his worshippers, the thinker and the poet could not escape the belief that the unity of divine rule demanded some real unity of the divine nature. Yet after all allowance has been made for the influence of Orphic theology and for the continuance of worship which had originally been of a mystic nature, the fact remains that this current of religious development met with little favor under the first Athenian confederacy.

The emphasis on the state and on successful human activity through the state found its natural expression in a state religion along lines suggested by the epic. The epic was a poetry of strenuous activity, on the whole happy and successful, under divine rulers. It was the great monument to the tendency of the Greeks to make their gods universal beings whose will was manifested in the government of the world. The Olympian ruling state corresponded at many points to the state ideal which was being developed at Athens. Naturally enough, the Athenians found here that phase of religion which was best suited to their new conception of life. The fact that the youth of the city were brought up on the Homeric poems as the central element in their education, made it inevitable that the state religion should develop along these lines.

In the first place the conception of the gods as anthropomorphic rulers of the world, and of the world as an expression of their divine will, obtained a new and different hold. The doctrine which Theognis and Solon had uttered in their poems became the general philosophy of life, accepted alike by the thinker, the politician, the military man. Through the epic much the same doctrine had made the gods more definitely persons and thus more human. That now it tended to remove the gods further away from human reach and human sympathy, that it made of worship a splendid tribute to such august powers, that religion became a matter for the state rather than for the individual, were the normal results of the changed conditions.

And the same conditions which made the gods Olympian rulers developed a belief in the uprightness of their rule. On the whole the gods of Homer governed justly, though the moral code of simple men did not bind their divine rulers any more than their human rulers. But the Athenians of the fifth century breathed a different atmosphere. Nominally, their own rule was based on ideals of justice and liberty for all; so of the gods they demanded inflexible justice. And religion had become so bound up with ethics that the moral law could only be interpreted as the holy expression of the divine nature. Earlier ages had usually been able to accept tales of divine immorality, and later ages could neglect them; this period alone must either purify myth or set it aside as "untrue." It was only of the gods conceived primarily as anthropomorphic rulers that the ideals of human morality must be predicated in a literal manner.

Again this type of state religion demanded that the validity of the gods rest on the same basis as the validity of the state itself. Not that the opinion of the individual made any special difference with reference either to the state or to its gods, so long as the processes of politics and of worship went on undisturbed. To insist on doubts as to the nature of the gods, however, would be talking treason; to interfere with worship would be an act of treason. The excitement about the mutilation of the *hermae*, and the prosecutions on the charge of impiety can only be understood from this standpoint.

The particular development of religious institutions in this period is the best illustration of the influence of the state ideal on religion. Just as Peisistratus had attempted to unify the people under his rule by uniting them in magnificent festivals to the gods of his state, so democratic Athens, now that it had become conscious of itself as a great state, sought to express its greatness by enriching the forms of its worship. The wealth which flowed in to the centre of the confederacy was used in part for the army and navy, in part it was devoted to the service of the gods; and both uses were justified on the ground that they strengthened the

state. The Parthenon was erected and a gold and ivory statue of Athena Parthenos placed within it, for it was Athena who was bringing the ideals of the Athenian state into the realm of fact. Other temples were erected, images were dedicated, and votive offerings brought to the gods, for the successes of the state were the direct manifestation of divine favor. The processions and sacrifices in honor of the gods were made more splendid; athletic contests and musical contests were added to the ancient ritual of the festivals; Apollo and Zeus, Demeter and Athena, simply received what was their proper due when the state they had made strong and wealthy returned this tribute to its divine rulers. And when the drama became the highest tribute of the Athenians to their gods, Dionysus took his place as one of these divine rulers. In fact it is difficult to discover any change in Greek religion during this epoch which was not due to this state ideal and its state gods.

During the fifth century more than in any other period the dominant religious conceptions were reflected in literature, for literature at this time, like painting and sculpture and architecture, was largely devoted to the honor of the state gods.

Early in the century Pindar and Aeschylus, the former for Greece, the latter primarily for Athens, sought to interpret the religious meaning of the Olympian worship and to harmonize it with the highest standards of ethical and religious thought. The extant odes of Pindar were written to honor individuals victorious in the games. They breathe a spirit of reverence for all that is noble and pure in the gods. Pindar rejects the story of Tantalus and Pelops as a slander, nor does he admit strife into the divine world. Zeus is exalted above the gods as himself the fate which allots to each man his destiny; his mighty mind guides the fortunes of the men he loves; success he sends to those who approach him reverently. Or again it is *god* who "accomplisheth all things according to his wish — *god* who overtaketh even the winged eagle, and outstrippeth the dolphin of the sea, who layeth low many a mortal in his haughtiness, while to others he

giveth glory imperishable."[1] In particular Pindar loved to dwell on Apollo, god of light and truth, giver of healing and musical harmony, "the most righteous partner" of father Zeus.[2] Along with these lofty conceptions of the gods, the poet retained myth, *i.e.* sacred story, as the subject-matter of his poetry. But his religious standards he set above the authority of tradition. Irreligious myths he freely rejected, consciously or not he rested the authority of myths on their moral and religious value for his age. Polydeuces, who laid aside every other day his right to immortality that he might enjoy the society of his mortal brother Castor in the lower world, Jason's endurance in pursuit of the task imposed on him, the sufferings of Ino and Semele crowned by entrance on a divine life, the punishment of Ixion for base ingratitude and of Tantalus for arrogance and presumption — such are the themes which are presented in Pindar's myths. And through them all runs the thought that men are descended from the gods, a kinship not forgotten by the gods. With all his clear vision for the gods of Olympus, Pindar is not deaf to the doctrines of Orphism. The life after death is fraught with good or evil according to man's life here; the soul returns after death to another body; yet its true destiny is a final return to the gods to which it is akin.

As Pindar honored individuals to whom Zeus had granted success, so Aeschylus honored the state in which men realized true freedom. In the city of Athena he makes the goddess say, "Reverence and Fear, akin to the citizens, shall check injustice day and night . . . not to be without ruler nor to be ruled by tyrant is my counsel."[3] Behind the state, guarding it, working through it, is God "the cause of all, the power that fashions all."[4]

> "May God good issue give!
> And yet the will of Zeus is hard to scan:
> Through all it brightly gleams,
> E'en though in darkness and the gloom of chance
> For us poor mortals wrapt. . . .

[1] *Pyth.* 2. 49.
[2] *Pyth.* 3. 28.
[3] Aeschylus, *Eumen.* 693 f.
[4] *Agam.* 1485.

All that Gods work is effortless and calm:
Seated on holiest throne,
Thence, though we know not how,
He works his perfect will."[1]

Apollo is the mouthpiece of this Zeus, Athena his embodied wisdom; in all the conflict of life the divine plan works itself out. For Aeschylus, as for Pindar, myth is a sacred history which the poet uses as a vehicle for great spiritual truths. He freely modifies myth with this end in view; the nature of sin, its far-reaching taint, its inevitable punishment,[2] the purifying effect of toil and suffering are the essential doctrines in that view of life which the poet presents by means of myth.

Much the same stern thoughts are presented more graciously by that favorite of the gods, Sophocles. He is said to have been a man devoted to their worship, guided by omens they sent, receiving the new god Asclepius in his house and so himself worshipped after death as the "Receiver" (Dexion). For Sophocles also Zeus is "all powerful, controlling all things,"[3] whose divine rule nothing escaped; "great Zeus is yet in heaven, he who watches over and directs all things."[4] All ethical law has its source and sanction in the gods: "May it be my lot to keep reverent purity in every word and deed! of which the laws are prescribed on high, begotten in the heavenly aether: Olympus alone is their father . . . God is great in them nor yet does he wax old and feeble."[5] And in the government of the world the holiness and purity of the gods is revealed though an Oedipus or an Antigone be crushed in the process. The sin of Clytaemnestra, of Laius, of Creon, brings a long train of evil in its wake. But in the case of Philoctetes and of Oedipus suffering at length works out the purification of man that he may serve as an instrument of the gods for good. But with all that is said about the purity of the gods, Sophocles does not attempt to remodel myth on an

[1] Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 85 f. trans. Plumptre.
[2] *Agam.* 67 f.
[3] Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 903.
[4] *Elec.* 174 f.
[5] *Oed. Tyr.* 864 f.

ethical basis; he simply passes over what does not suit his purpose. And while he holds fast to certain fundamental ethical principles, he is far from reducing religion to any rationalistic basis. The mysterious both in worship and in the nature of the gods is very attractive to this poet; to pry into the mysteries of religion seems to him an example of that presumption which is the essence of sin. Inspiration and revelation from the divine powers he is very ready to accept. In particular there is an evident purpose in his extant dramas to exalt the function of Apollo at Delphi as the mouthpiece of the gods. The oracles of the god always prove true; once when they seem to have failed, the chorus utters the sentiment that the worship of the gods at Athens should cease at once, unless the revelation of the divine will by Apollo is promptly proved to be true — and the apparent failure leads to an awful justification of the god's foresight.[1]

In the honor paid to the Delphic god, as at many other points, Herodotus is intimately associated with Sophocles. Herodotus accepts the oracles and the presence of the gods in human life, while he freely criticises myth; for in religion as in geography and in history he is guided by a somewhat naïve sense for the reality which comes within the range of experience. Judging by the facts of human life, he is impressed by the limitations of man and by the power of the gods; and the facts suggest to him gods jealous of their prerogatives rather than gods primarily just. As the relations of Greece and Persia seem to him to be determined by the unreasonable greatness of the eastern power which provokes jealous retribution from the gods, so each stage in the history, the account of Croesus, of Polycrates, of Candaules, of Miltiades, illustrates the same principle. "You see how divine lightning strikes very great animals and God does not permit them to exhibit themselves proudly, while small ones do not excite his wrath; and thunderbolts always strike large buildings and tall trees; for God loves to bring to naught anything that is excessive . . . nor does he permit any but himself to think proud thoughts."[2] In his treatment

[1] *Oed. Tyr.* 895 f.

[2] Herodotus, 7. 10. 5.

of religious phenomena Herodotus shows his critical instinct by analyzing them and referring some to a Pelasgic source, others to an Egyptian source. And with all his curiosity and credulity he does not hesitate to reject what does not seem to him natural or to explain away some marvels. The existence of griffins, for instance, he refuses to believe; and the prophesying doves of Dodona he explains as priestesses who had come from Egypt, and who were called doves because their words were at first unintelligible.[1] Herodotus felt the deepest interest in the great shrines of Greece and the mysterious doctrines of their priests, but he was often deterred by awe from imparting what he learned. At Delphi it seems that he obtained much material for his history, and in the earlier part of his work he appears as the frank defender of the claims of the oracle.[2]

**3. The Peloponnesian War.** — The latter part of the fifth century at Athens constitutes a period quite as distinct in its social and religious tendencies as in its political developments. The Peloponnesian war was the great struggle which Athenian statesmen had long foreseen, and which ended after nearly thirty years in the temporary overthrow of Athens. Democracy in the city had become impatient of wise leadership; now some scheme for world-power, such as the Sicilian expedition, now some sudden impulse of resentment, as in the condemnation of the generals at Arginusae, proved the essential weakness of Athens. Wild schemes for social betterment of the masses were in the air. Moreover, science and philosophy were beginning to make a wide impression on the Athenian view of life. The conception of nature as a reality independent of and including both gods and men, the idea of natural law as distinct from any personal will, the thought of moral and legal requirements as conventions, the validity of which might well be questioned — such were some of the main problems which gradually attracted the attention of thinking people. As mysticism earlier had been driven into the background by

[1] Herodotus, 2. 55.

[2] "Herodotus and the Oracle at Delphi," *Classical Journal*, 1 (1906) 37 f.

the state ideal and the Olympian religion, so now the state phase of religion was threatened by the rising current of intellectualism.

What may be termed rationalism, or better intellectualism, in religious matters was not a new development at the end of the fifth century; it was only its reach and its grasp that were new.[1] Up to this time it had appeared in two forms, in a rationalism which neglected or undermined belief in the gods, and in a reflection which modified religious conceptions to accord with ethical and philosophical principles. The religious type of intellectualism appeared as early as Hesiod and reached its height in Pindar and Aeschylus. It amounted to an assertion that religion is not merely a matter of tradition, but rather a subject to be tested by critical standards in order to determine its truth. Among the historians, the credulous Herodotus applied the same standards to religion as to other matters, and rejected many myths on the ground of improbability. Among the earlier philosophers, Empedocles made a real place for the gods in his system; he followed Xenophanes in rejecting all traces of anthropomorphism, but he spoke with reverence of God (Apollo?) as the intelligence of the universe; his purpose to purify belief and to reform worship appeared in much of his work. This line of effort accomplished a little in raising religious belief to a higher plane, but until a much later age its influence was limited to a relatively small circle.

The negative criticism of religion had played a larger part in the work of the early philosophers. The absurdities of superstition made it an easy mark for Xenophanes and Heracleitus, while some of their successors were rather inclined to omit all reference to religion. The conception of the physical world as an ultimate fact, and of law as a fixed natural process, seemed to leave little place for religion. It was possible, however, to admit the existence in nature of beings superior to man who influenced him for good or for evil. In some such way Democritus admitted a place for religion, even while he explained away many myths as illusions caused by phenomena of the heavens.

[1] Decharme, *La critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs*, iii–vi.

At Athens, soon after the middle of the fifth century, it was rather the negative phase of philosophy which attracted the attention of the people. Visiting sophists were beginning to show them how easy it was to refute not only so-called philosophical systems, but also the demands of custom, of morals, and of law. As law and morals were useful to weak members of society, so, they taught, a belief in gods is useful in making the strong afraid to injure the weak.[1] The strongest proof that religion, morality, and law belonged to social convention rather than to the realities of nature they found in the fact that among different peoples belief and custom and law were so radically different. Man, the individual man, is the measure of all things, declared Protagoras. These doctrines tended to develop individualism as over against all social authority; in particular the authority of religious belief and religious practice was often questioned.

Yet while religion remained so closely connected with the state as in Athens during the fifth century B.C., public attacks on religion could not pass unheeded. The avowed "atheist" was condemned by public opinion, and even the courts took cognizance of charges of impiety. Diagoras, who mocked at the mysteries and divulged their secrets, had a price set on his head; the names of Cinesias and of Hippon who wrote the epitaph, "Death has made me like the gods," were handed down as objects of contempt. For one and only one period in Greek history thinking men were brought into court on the charge of impiety. Anaxagoras was driven from Athens for teaching that the sun was (not a god but) an incandescent stone. Aspasia was brought into court on the charge of impiety. Pheidias was forced to meet the same charge because he had placed his own likeness and that of Pericles on the shield of his Athena Parthenos. Socrates was condemned to death "because he did not recognize the gods of the state, but introduced new divinities, and moreover, because he corrupted the youth."[2] Others still were charged with introducing the worship of foreign gods without permission of the

[1] Plato, *Leg.* 10, p. 889 E.

[2] Plato, *Apol.* 19 B.

state. The charge of impiety brought against Alcibiades, the profanation of the mysteries, itself illustrates the weakened ties of religion, in that such an act seemed to be possible. Overt acts of this sort against public worship would always subject a man to punishment, while trials for impious teaching were limited to a brief period.

In a word, the intellectual movement which culminated in the study of science, in the development of education, and in the spread of popular philosophy at Athens toward the end of the fifth century, assumed a form directly hostile to organized religion. Its whole influence tended to weaken traditional faith in the gods, nor was any reconciliation of faith and philosophy as yet in sight.

Had not the state ideal in society and the state phase of religion obtained so strong a foothold in the half century preceding the Peloponnesian war, they would hardly have survived the forces now at work. The new education, thoroughly individualistic in its first results, was a menace to patriotism and the demands of the state; a crude democracy resented the limitations of the constitution; and from outside the very existence of the state was threatened by the war. Yet the state ideal had developed strength enough to weather the attacks from without and from within. And with the state ideal the state religion remained in control of the masses of the people. Men listened with interested curiosity to the speculations of a Euripides; but when he went too far, his boldness was promptly checked. The splendid ritual of worship went on as before, the worship of the Athenian people to gods which it publicly recognized as supreme.

So far as the mystic side of religion was concerned, the conditions for its development were much more favorable. Successful activity did not draw men's thoughts away from spiritual things or satisfy their aspirations in a more immediate manner. The gods of the state no longer showed their favor to every undertaking, but oftentimes they were tried and found wanting. When siege and defeat and pestilence made this world look dark, the demand for "redemption," for religious "cures," came to be

generally felt.[1] The wandering oracle-vender found a ready sale for his wares; the priest, who promised blessings by means of his initiations, was welcomed among those who felt the woes of life; again unusual and private forms of worship were introduced to meet demands which ordinary sacrifices and festivals did not satisfy. Yet the public organization of religion in the worship of the state gods was so strongly intrenched that it was modified but little by such innovations.

Among the writers of this period Euripides deserves first mention, not because his work begins with the Peloponnesian war, but because he anticipated the spirit which then prevailed. He rejected some of the old myths, *e.g.* the story of Leda and the swan and of Erichthonius's birth from the soil, not on moral and religious grounds like Aeschylus, but because they seemed to him improbable. And when he did condemn the gods for immorality, his tone was critical rather than religious. It is peculiarly difficult to estimate correctly the religious views of Euripides. Writing under the influence of the new movement of thought at Athens, yet himself a poet and no philosopher, keenly alive to human weaknesses and human ills, yet honoring that ideal which made Athens great, he presents problems rather than principles in his tragedies. Retribution to the sinner is a fact of experience, but who knows if it comes from the gods worshipped at Athens? And who knows of the soul and its destiny, beyond the fact that insight, energy, virtue, ordinarily bring their reward in this present life? "The gods, whatever the gods are"[2] sounds like the critical scepticism of a sophist. To interpret Zeus now as Intelligence, now as Necessity, or to make the Erinyes the hallucinations of a disordered brain, suggests an attempt to rationalize the gods. Such suggestions and problems proved intensely interesting to the audience when the poet did not go too far, even though the questionings did not meet with general assent. Certainly the attacks on Euripides prove his influence. Even in the *Bacchantes* the poet, now an old man, does not entirely change his view. The outcome of his

[1] Plato, *Politia*, 2, p. 364 B.

[2] *Orest.* 418.

experience as developed in this tragedy is simply, "Whatever the gods are, let us bow to them."

The old comedy as represented by Aristophanes was much closer to the thought of the people than was tragedy. Religious parody, which was so striking a feature of Aristophanes's work, was not inconsistent with religious belief and practice in Greece from Homer on. Not simply Heracles and Hermes and Dionysus were the objects of Aristophanes's buffoonery; Zeus himself must furnish fun for his audience. Not simply the quack diviner and the vender of oracles, but the priest of the state religion also was held up to ridicule. Nor was the worship of Asclepius or Dionysus or Demeter free from the poet's gibes. Yet in Aristophanes there was no denial of the gods, nothing that was felt by his audience to be a religious profanation. On the contrary the tone of his work was on the whole conservative in religion as in other matters. In the *Clouds* he appears as the direct defender of the old ideals of life and the old religion. A sincere religious spirit seems to pervade his hymns to the gods. He is first of all a comedian, but just for this reason he reflects the views of his hearers. In fact his fun always presupposes (1) an elaborate state ritual universally accepted, and (2) a general belief in the actual power and presence of the gods. Whatever his own views may have been, the faithfulness of Aristophanes to his art made his comedies a witness to the essential religiousness of Athens at the end of the fifth century.

Much the same conclusion as to the hold of religion on the people may be drawn from the history of Thucydides and from the orations of Antiphon. Thucydides contrasts sharply the prophecies of the oracle-mongers and the genuine words of the Delphic Apollo[1]; while condemning the superstitions of a Nicias, he notes the enfeebled fear of the gods and of divine justice as one of the evils produced by the Peloponnesian war[2]; he refers to the epic and some particular myths with no note of criticism. Although he gives no indications of devoutness on his own part,

[1] Thucydides, 2. 54; cp. 5. 103. 2; 5. 26. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, 3. 82. 6; cp. 2. 53.

he clearly recognizes the importance of religion as it existed at Athens. So Antiphon continually bases his argument on popular belief in a divine justice which punishes the guilty, and in a divine purity which turns away from a man or a city polluted with evil. These statements might be mere rhetoric, but they would lose their value as rhetoric unless they were addressed to a people religiously inclined.

**4. The Fourth Century.** — With the close of the fifth century we may almost say that the religious development of Greece was ended ; none of the later changes can be regarded as new movements of primary importance, and on the whole the later history of religion in Greece is concerned with the degeneration and disappearance of the forces which at this time were in operation. Only philosophy had not said its last word on matters of religion, but the teaching of philosophy was confined to a very limited range. For the people the old religion was to become little more than a form, a form which could offer small resistance to the cruder but more vital cults of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.

The fourth century at Athens in the first place was marked by a further development of the individualistic spirit. The teaching of the Sophists had been accepted by relatively few persons, but the centrifugal forces set in motion at the time of the Peloponnesian war had a far wider influence than direct teaching. In politics individualism showed itself in a loss of public spirit. When men began to ask whether they existed for the good of the state, or the state for their welfare and protection, it was difficult to enforce the demands of patriotism. Moreover the loss of political power had for Athens a surprisingly small effect on her commerce, or on her intellectual and artistic prestige. Naturally the thought of the state as such gave way before the thought of the larger Hellenic world ; a cosmopolitan spirit began to prevail, which made the claims of society rest lightly as compared with the claims of individual welfare.

The spread of education worked in the same direction. The self-development which it proposed as an end was diametrically

opposed to self-devotion for the community, for the more a man's attention was focussed on the training of his own powers as an end in itself, the less he was inclined to regard himself merely as one fraction of the state.

The spread of private luxury was a cause as well as a symptom of individualism. In a striking passage Demosthenes points out that the magnificence which the fifth century had devoted to temples and public buildings, was now lavished on the houses of the rich.[1] The productions of great painters and sculptors, because so often they were used for mere adornment and private pleasure, were often created with no higher end in view. The great works in literature were not poetry but prose, not dramas for public performance but essays for the drawing-room or the study; they were not grand and imposing but rather were finished with delicate grace. The effect of private luxury in Greece was all the more baneful for higher ideals of life because it was not satisfied in a barbaric or oriental manner.

It is but looking at this individualism from another point of view to say that the fourth century differed from the fifth in the relative absence of great controlling ideals. Not simply patriotism, political honor also, and military honor had a weaker hold; prizes, crowns, honorary decrees, were needed as rewards for public service. The objective activity which had given to life its tone, now yielded to self-conscious reflection, to musing introspection, often to a note of ennui and melancholy. In other phases of life as well as in religion the age of faith had gone by.

The change in the spirit of the age is strikingly reflected in the modified conception of the gods. The gods on the Parthenon frieze, like the statue of Athena inside the temple, are divine counterparts of the statesmen who were making Athens great; for these gods, too, stood for high ideals and for the energy which made those ideals effective. In contrast with these types of the gods in the fifth century, the statue of Peace carrying her child Wealth has rightly been regarded as a symbol of the spirit of the

[1] Demosthenes, 3. 25.

following century. The Aphrodite unrobing for the bath, which Praxiteles made for her Cnidian temple, was the goddess of a people devoted to the love of beauty and grace. And the Hermes found at Olympia still repeats its message that the Greek youth of Praxiteles's time found in self-conscious musing the natural sequence to a gymnastics and an education which aimed to give the body and the mind their perfect development.

Such changes in the conception of the gods seem to have brought no corresponding change in the forms of worship. The gods were still part of the conception of the state and their worship was one phase of the state's activity. The orators of the fourth century not only use the gods to swear by and to conjure by, they refer again and again to the proverbial care of the gods for Athens, and in the blessing of the gods they find hope for the city in the future. Devotion to the state was an underlying motive to keep up the ancient forms of worship at the shrines of the city, while on the other hand the influence of the public festivals still tended to keep up the consciousness of common political bonds among the people. In his first Philippic[1] Demosthenes complains that the military officials remain at home to take charge of religious processions instead of engaging in service at the front, and that the organizing genius of the city as well as its funds are devoted to religious festivals rather than to the war against Macedon. It would not be fair to say that the enjoyment of the Dionysia or the Panathenaea was the reason why such pains were taken in their celebration, though certainly popular pleasure was one end in view. The festivals were maintained partly for pleasure, partly for genuine religious motives, but largely because they were institutions hallowed by long observance on the part of the state. So far as Demosthenes is concerned, it is hard to doubt the genuineness of his appeals to the gods, yet there is no evidence of deep religious feeling on the part of either audience or speaker. If Demosthenes is contrasted with Antiphon, we might well believe that the former was the more religious individual; we can hardly

[1] Demosthenes, 4. 26 and 35.

believe that his hearers found the same meaning in religion as did those who listened to Antiphon.

In the fine passage on the beginning of the sacred war Aeschines almost persuades his readers now, as he claims to have persuaded his hearers then, that the oath and its consequences were a dread reality.[1] The religious emotions of these delegates were strong enough to be used with effect by the political speaker, but even under the shadow of the Delphic oracle the most solemn form of devotion had not checked the cultivation of the sacred plain. The Greek gods were made for man, not man for the gods.

Difficult as it is to use the pleas of a lawyer, the speeches of a statesman, the pamphlets of a teacher of rhetoric, in getting at the religious ideas of the people, the testimony of the orators is fairly simple. There is abundant evidence that the state kept up the forms of religious worship in all their magnificence. That faith in the gods was at all a ruling principle in human life, or that genuine religious emotions were stirred and satisfied by this worship, we find no proof in the extant works of the orators. But Athenian gods had made Athens great, and in the struggles to revive that greatness the observances of worship were loyally maintained.

The changes in worship during this period were largely due to a practical (not to say a superstitious) impulse on the part of individuals. The presence of this practical vein in religious matters at the beginning of the fourth century is seen in the attitude of Xenophon. His writings teem with references to the forms of religion. In the retreat of the ten thousand he himself depended constantly on dreams and omens to ascertain the will of the gods; his fear of divine anger was a governing principle; his ideal cavalry officer would act according to the will of the gods, and his hunting dogs were to be loosed with a prayer to Apollo and Artemis.[2] Such devotion to the forms of religion on the part of a typical Athenian soldier testifies to the hold of reli-

[1] Aeschines, 3. 107 f.

[2] Xenophon, *Hipparch.* 1. 1; *Cynegel.* 1. 1 f.

gious practice among the people. Even though a man of shallow nature had no sense for the deeper meaning of religion, he saw its practical possibilities in controlling what was otherwise outside his power; just because religion had a practical value, the soldier and the merchant could not afford to neglect it.

The same practical impulse largely accounts for the fact that at the beginning of the fourth century the worship of Asclepius was established as one of the state cults. Heroes had received the prayer of the sick for healing in Attica, but no hero had ever gained such a reputation as the god Asclepius for power to overcome disease. His reputation had brought invalids in great numbers to Epidaurus; the shrine had assumed the form of a great hospital for the care of the sick under divine direction; its success is still attested by the offerings of men who there had found healing. Now the journey to Epidaurus might be saved and the gifts of the god made more accessible by introducing a branch of this religious hospital at Athens. First in private houses Asclepius worship was begun at Athens, and soon priests with their sacred serpents and other paraphernalia of worship were brought to the city that the cult might be established in due form. The south side of the Acropolis proved a spot admirably adapted to the medical purpose of this worship. The ruins of its temples, its sacred spring, and its buildings for the care of the sick still attest the importance that a new worship could gain when it offered such practical blessings to its worshippers.

This practical impulse showed itself also in the effort to ascertain and control the future by some stronger means than the routine sacrifices of the state religion. The revival of the Orphic movement, to which Plato if not Demosthenes bears witness, was due quite as much to the desire for higher potencies to control one's destiny as to any real effort for spiritual ends. The Orphic conception of life was no doubt gratifying to some because it placed the standard of genuine happiness and the goal of human life in another phase of existence. And there was much about the Orphic theology which appealed to thinkers like Plato; his

myths adopt Orphic imagery; his whole account of the soul, its origin, and its destiny is based on Orphic conceptions. But Plato's allusions to Orphic "initiations" and the condemnation of such religious exercises by Demosthenes[1] indicate that they were what more than anything else appealed to the people in mystic religion. Because the priests promised blessedness here and hereafter to their adherents, and because the ritual seemed so effective in reaching the unseen powers that control life, this type of religion had a wider influence than at any time during the fifth century.

Much the same influences were at work in the introduction of foreign worships into Attica.[2] These were brought in the first instance by foreigners themselves who had obtained permission to establish the worship of their native gods at the point where they had settled, *i.e.* mainly in the Peiraeus. That Athenian citizens should seek admission to the inner circle of the worshippers of Bendis or Kottyto seems strange at first sight. No doubt the intensity of these rites produced a refreshing sense of genuineness which attracted many. Still it was rather the practical impulse, the impulse to control the mysterious forces in the world for the benefit of the individual, which accounts for this tendency. Because the state religion had become stereotyped form, great as was the respect in which this form was held, it did not stand in the way of any new worship which met a practical need.

Over against the old forms of worship and the new more superstitious phase of religion, the philosophical criticism of religious conceptions went on unhindered. The relation of philosophy and religion is to be considered in a later chapter, but the result for this period may be briefly stated here. The sharp antagonism between philosophy and established religion came to an abrupt end, first because people having become accustomed to the criticism of the gods realized that its immediate effect was harmless, and secondly because philosophy began to take a broader view

[1] Plato, *Politia*, 2, p. 364 B; Demosthenes, 18. 259 f. [2] Cp. supra, p. 127.

of what religion meant. In his *Republic* Plato did not discuss religious institutions but referred them to the Delphic oracle[1]; a city without gods was to him inconceivable. The name "God," which Plato and Aristotle both apply to the hypothetical being in which their systems culminated, would be meaningless except as these thinkers recognized some deep reality in the religious sentiment of their day. While religion as such had little directly to hope from philosophical investigation, the indirect result was by no means small. In contrast with the materialistic scepticism which occupied popular attention at the end of the fifth century, philosophy was now both positive and idealistic. Just in so far as the successors of Socrates recognized thought as the great fact in the world, and found in the ideals cherished by individuals and by society the most important realities of life, the path was open for philosophy to become the handmaid of religion. The immediate results of a deeper philosophy were never very large for Greek religion, for it had no vitality to assimilate the fruits of thought; it is only in the history of Christianity that the meaning of Greek philosophy for religion came to be realized.

[1] Plato, *Politia*, 4, p. 427 B.

# CHAPTER V

## THE OUTCOME OF GREEK RELIGION

**1. Religion in the Hellenistic Age.** — With the conquests of Alexander the internal development of Hellenism all but ceased, and history is concerned with its external development. The scene is shifted from the Balkan peninsula to a world which extended from India to Spain, from Scythia to Egypt; and for this world the centre of culture was no longer Athens, but successively Alexandria, Pergamon, Antioch, Rhodes. That the Greek language followed the army and became a common medium of communication in Egypt, Syria, and the far East seems strange enough; it is almost incredible that there should be truth in Plutarch's statement[1] that Homer was commonly read in Asia, that "children of the Persians, of the inhabitants of Susa, and of the Gedrosians played the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles," that inhabitants of India, Bactria, and the Caucasus worshipped the Greek gods; yet as to the spread of Greek civilization there can be no doubt. "Greek culture alone had the capacity to embrace and interpret all the rest of the world; its spirit made a universal appeal through poetry, art, and philosophy;"[2] and in the hands of Alexander this influence became operative. The history of religion in this epoch is concerned mainly with the part which religion played in the spread of Hellenism.

So far as Greece itself is concerned, the student's interest is primarily in such religious changes as prepare the way for the wider influence of Greek religion. The decay of sectional patriot-

[1] Plutarch, *De Alexandri fortuna*, 5, p. 328 C, D.

[2] Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, 4. 423.

ism, patriotism to one's own particular city-state, inevitably meant for Greece the end of patriotism as a determining ideal in human life; for cosmopolitanism was merely devotion to no state. The result was twofold. On the one hand the career of the statesman could no longer appeal to men of real capacity and high ideals; unless their ambition were satisfied in the amassing of wealth or in the business of war, they must turn to science or to philosophy. On the other hand a religion which was intimately bound up with the state lost much of its hold on men who no longer cared for the state; they might observe its forms from tradition, or in order to keep up the old pomp and splendor, but the ritual had lost its power to meet a genuine religious need. The first of these results helped the new spirit of research which had been kindled by Aristotle. For religion, the only important effect of philological and scientific investigation was that it increased the tendency of the Greeks to see in their own gods other forms of the gods worshipped in Egypt and in the East — a "theocrasy" which had no mean importance as a factor in the spread of Greek culture, for it gave a cosmopolitan aspect to an essentially sectional religion. But on philosophy both of these results had an effect which was deep and far reaching for the history of Greek religion.

Already in the fourth century the need of a religion more real than the pageantry of state worship had lent a strong impulse to philosophy. From Plato on, the leaders of thought had recognized this need, and their followers had been inspired quite as much by the desire for a really religious explanation of the world as for one that was only metaphysical. Now with the downfall of the city-state and the consequent weakening of the religion connected with it, men could only turn to foreign superstition or to philosophy to satisfy this need. Moreover there was little to satisfy men of higher nature except in science and in philosophy. That under these circumstances ethical philosophy should in some measure take the place of religion, that the philosopher should dispense spiritual warning and comfort, that his moral ideals should be a somewhat effective antidote to materialism, superstition, and self-

ish greed, is a striking tribute to the higher element in the Greek nature. The search for relief from the evils of life, which the Greeks called the effort for *salvation* (σωτηρία), has at many periods in human history driven men to luxury and selfish pleasure or again to asceticism or to superstitious rites; in later Greece, as in these days, it produced "Ethical Culture" societies.

The attitude of these later philosophers to the old Greek gods is a relatively unimportant matter, except as it illustrates the strong hold of traditional religion on the people generally. Only the Sceptics, who introduced the universal principle of doubt, expressed doubt as to the existence of the Olympian deities; philosophers who had a system of thought included the gods in this system. The Epicureans followed the founder of that school in admitting their existence as superior beings even while they denied them any potent influence in human affairs. The attitude of the Stoics varied at different times. An allegorical explanation was frequently given, or the gods were classed as intermediate beings between men and ultimate (divine) being. Stoics of religious nature like Chrysippus expressed their attitude toward the fundamental unity of the world in purely religious language. So far, then, as the wider spread of Greek religion is concerned, philosophy helped to break the local ties of the Greek gods without destroying the gods themselves, and further it made men even more ready to identify Greek gods with gods from other nations.

Besides the internal changes in religion due to cosmopolitanism and to an ethical idealism, the introduction of foreign cults into Greece itself made some further changes. Greece had never been hospitable to foreign worships, but it had always been susceptible, at times strangely susceptible, to their influence. An examination of the evidence fails to show any marked and widespread introduction of foreign worship in this period, except in the case of the worship of Isis. The "Mother of the Gods" from Asia Minor had found worshippers in Greece even during the fifth century; foreign residents in the Peiraeus continued to make much of this worship; and in the Peloponnese foreign rites were frequently

introduced into the local worship of a similar goddess. Attis, who was so intimately connected with the Phrygian Mother, was also worshipped at the Peiraeus[1] and at Patras; but Attis was never adopted into Greek religion as into religion at Rome. The worship of Adonis was known at Athens in the fifth century B.C., but it made little progress later.[2] It was not till about 100 A.D. that the worship of Mithras was brought to Greece as to Rome. The worship of Isis, however, seems to have won considerable influence in Greece in the Hellenistic epoch.

FIG. 71. — FIGURE OF ISIS WITH SISTRON

The ancient Egyptian Isis, the rain-giving heaven which was the mother of all things and in particular of the sun, was not wholly unknown in the Greek islands (*e.g.*, Cyprus and Rhodes) in early times. When Alexander the Great founded Alexandria in Egypt, he made the worship of Isis prominent in the new city; and later this worship was enriched by the rites of Serapis. Foreigners had been permitted to establish the worship of Isis at the Peiraeus as early as 333 B.C.;[3]

[1] *C.I.A.* II. 622; Pausanias, 7. 20. 3, cf. 7. 17. 9.
[2] Aristophanes, *Lys.* 389; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18, p. 200.
[3] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 551.

under the Ptolemies Athenian citizens welcomed the new worship and there remains abundant evidence of the hold it obtained. A shrine of Serapis near the Prytaneum, an altar in the precinct of Asclepius, a shrine of Isis on the south slope of the Acropolis, votive offerings to these gods and inscriptions mentioning their priests, coins, and reliefs, especially reliefs representing Athenian women with the attributes of Isis, all testify to the importance of this religion from the third century on.[1] In the Aegean islands the influence of the Ptolemies and of the Isis religion was even more marked. At Tithorea there was an important centre of the Isis mysteries where only those were received to whom the goddess had revealed herself in a dream.[2] In the rest of Boeotia, in the vicinity of Corinth, and at many points in the Peloponnese, the worship of Isis found a ready reception — the more ready because the Greeks recognized in her a form of one of their own gods.

Occasionally Isis as a goddess of the heavens was identified with Selene or with Io; sometimes she was recognized as Hera, the queen of the gods, or as Hygieia, the goddess of health; among her functions was the protection of women in childbirth and the power to stir the heart with love, functions which to the Greek meant Aphrodite; but more commonly she was a goddess of the mysteries, an Egyptian form of Demeter. The reception of Isis as a form of Demeter was the more natural because the two goddesses touched at many points. Isis, like Demeter, had become a goddess of the fertile earth and of the grain which it produced; Isis and Serapis were gods of the world of souls; and the symbols of Demeter, cista and basket and torches and serpents, early had found a place in the worship of Isis. Near Hermione, an old centre of Demeter worship, it is said that the mysteries of Demeter were celebrated in the precinct of an Isis temple.[3] Apuleius[4] describes as much as he deems right of the initiation into the mysteries of

[1] Milchhoefer, *Schriftquellen zur Topographie von Athen*, xxxv, xxxix; *Jour. Hell. Stud.* (1889), Plate 77, EE, 9-10; Von Sybel, *Ath. Mitth.* 8 (1883) 26.

[2] Pausanias, 10. 32. 13.

[3] Pausanias, 2. 34. 10.

[4] *Metamorphoses*, 11. 16 f.

Isis. The bath by the priests with prayers to the goddess, the instruction in sacred rules of life, with the abstinence from meat and wine during the period of initiation, the investing of the candidate with a mystic robe and crown of palm leaves, the vision of the image of Isis which only the initiated might see, and the "birthday feast" with which the ceremonies ended — all were imposing rites calculated to impress an age which demanded some new and more effective means of coming into connection with the divine. The higher mysteries of Isis were the more esteemed because they were not, like the Eleusinian mysteries, open to every class in society; they were designed to appeal to men of culture and education, and they were too expensive for the lower classes. The hold which they rapidly gained was no doubt due mainly to the nature of this personal appeal. The universal character of the Isis religion, which seemed to sum up in itself the contents of other forms of worship and the other gods, was a second factor in its success. But perhaps the most important factor was the organized priesthood which carried forward the new religion. These were the same factors which had been present at the end of the sixth century in the Orphic movement. But the Greece of the third and second centuries B.C. quite lacked the nascent life of Greece in the sixth century and the religion of Isis never attained either the direct or the indirect influence which must be assigned to Orphism.[1] Still it was an important element in religion through all the Greek world for several centuries; it was the most important competitor of Christianity in Egypt and in Rome; and through the Gnostic sect it made its power felt by Christianity.

The internal changes in Greek religion at this time, as we have pointed out, were (1) the increased importance assigned to ethical ideals, until philosophy might take the place of religion for many minds, (2) the readiness to see new interpretations of the old gods or to identify them with gods worshipped elsewhere, and (3)

[1] On the religion of Isis see further the articles by E. Meyer and Drexler in Roscher's *Lexikon*, and Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 416 and 554.

the introduction of at least one foreign type of religion to meet needs which traditional rites did not satisfy. At the same time the old forms of worship were scrupulously observed as part of that heritage which Greece learned to prize the more as men saw how it was prized by other peoples. The spread of Greek religion throughout the eastern world was largely an outcome of the same causes which produced these changes, while at the same time the new, cosmopolitan character of religion was a condition of its extension. To the character of Alexander, however, and to the avowed policy of many of his successors, the continued importance of the old religion may be attributed.

The accounts of Alexander represent him as devoted to all the forms of Greek religion no less than Xenophon himself.[1] His marvellous escapes in battle he assigned to special divine protection (*τὸ θεῖον*). The regular sacrifices (*κατὰ νόμον*), divination before a battle and thank-offerings after special successes, are repeatedly mentioned by Arrian. Alexander's realistic belief in the world of myth is evinced by his conduct at Ilium and at Nysa. At Ilium he worshipped before the tombs of Achilles and Protesilaus, while in the temple of Athena he exchanged his armor for ancient weapons that had been consecrated to the goddess and thereafter caused these weapons to be borne before him in battle.[2] Mt. Meros near Nysa, the supposed scene of Dionysus's birth, he ascended with his companions to engage in Bacchic rites on this holy soil.[3] In every foreign country he engaged in the local worship and caused the temples to be preserved or rebuilt. When he founded Alexandria in Egypt, he paid special attention to the gods and the establishment of their worship. One of the striking scenes in his career was the great banquet at Opis,[4] where Macedonians, Persians, and representatives of other nations, nine thousand in all, joined in one great libation under the guidance of Greek seers, while Alexander prayed for every good and harmony and a peaceful rule by Greeks and Persians together. The reli-

[1] Cf. p. 269, *supra*.
[2] Arrian, 1. 11. 7 f.
[3] Arrian, 5. 2. 5 f.
[4] Arrian, 7. 11. 8.

gious nature of Alexander is seen in his request that his mother send him a cook skilled in sacrifices, to which Olympias responded as follows: "Receive Pelignas, the cook, from your mother; for he understands all the hereditary sacrifices of our family, and all the orgiastic and Bacchic rites which Olympias is wont to perform, these too he understands." [1]

It is hardly necessary to add that a man who kept with him in his campaigns the manuscript of the *Iliad* worshipped the Olympian gods and shared foreign rites only because he regarded foreign divinities as forms of the Olympian gods (*θεοκρασία*).[2] As Philip had protected Delphi, and recognized the place of the Greek religion in the common inheritance of Greece, so it was this same religion which Alexander carried with him and planted wherever he went.

The policy of Alexander was continued by his successors, though with varying interest. The Ptolemies in Egypt kept up most friendly relations with the ancient temples and their priests, but without committing themselves to any reactionary movement. On the other hand, the international worship of Adonis at Alexandria, a worship for Egyptians, Semites, and Greeks alike, was established with great pomp. To this epoch also belongs the worship of Serapis (Sarapis)[3]. A dream of Ptolemy Lagi was interpreted by Timotheus, a Greek priest from Eleusis, to demand the introduction of this cult. The image of a god of the underworld (Pluto, accompanied by Cerberus and a serpent) was fetched from Sinope on the Pontus, only to be identified with Serapis (a form of Osiris) and worshipped with Isis. The earlier temple of Isis and Serapis was torn down to make way for a splendid Serapeum, and Serapis became the most important god of Alexandria.

The attitude of the Seleucidae toward local forms of religion was less consistent, but they pursued the definite policy of introducing Greek worship as such. Along with the Greek drama,

[1] Athenaeus, 14. 78, p. 659 F.

[2] Cp. Plutarch, *De Alexandri fortuna*, 5, p. 328.

[3] Cp. p. 276. The name has been interpreted as *Osiris-apis*.

Greek philosophy, and Greek rhetoric, an Olympian festival was introduced into Antioch[1] and the worship of the Greek gods was enforced, *e.g.* by Antiochus Epiphanes. The Greek myth of Daphne and Apollo was localized at Antioch and a large, well-watered grove became the centre of the most important worship in all this region.[2] But the great work of the Seleucidae was to continue Alexander's policy of hellenizing the East; and wherever they carried Greek civilization, they introduced the Greek gods or grafted their worship on to rites already existing.

Thus it came about that Greek religion, which was essentially local by nature, came to be almost a "world-religion." The universalizing influence of myth was a necessary prerequisite; Delphi and Olympia had helped toward this end; the old local and national ties had been weakened; and when a power that was only half Greek became the mediator between Hellenism and the eastern world, religious forms were so much a part of Greek culture that they too were widely distributed through that world. It is true that the worship of the gods kept much of that sectional form which had always been its characteristic. Whenever an old cult was hellenized or a Greek cult newly established, it stood independent of any outside organization, like the earlier shrines in Greece. The fact remains that for a rather brief period the religion of the eastern world was (at least nominally) Greek religion.

It was the power of Rome and soon the power of early Christianity which completely ended the forces that had produced this state of affairs. Yet no great factor in civilization, least of all the religious belief and worship of ancient Greece, has passed away and left no mark on the later world. Through its effect on the different phases of Hellenism, particularly through its influence on Roman religion and through its more subtle influence on Christianity, Greek religion had set in motion forces which are still operative.

**2. The Influence of Greek Religion on Roman Religion.** — In the preceding sections the outcome of Greek religion has been

[1] Libanius, p. 364. [2] Strabo, 16, p. 750.

traced, as it spread with other phases of Greek civilization eastward through all the regions that had been included in Alexander's empire. The influence of Greek religion in the west was felt at a much earlier period, but it was not until the third century B.C. that it began to dominate religious belief and practice in Rome itself. The religion of the Roman empire was quite as much Greek as Roman, and through Rome the Greek gods became an integral factor of later European civilization. Again, the influence of Greek religion directly and indirectly on Christianity was very great. Of the various factors which determined the early development of Christianity in matters of ritual, of theology, and of organization, probably no one was more important than Greek religion, nor can any return to primitive Christianity, so-called *pure* Christianity, entirely cut out elements from this source. The concluding sections of this historical sketch of Greek religion will treat these two streams of influence, eventually uniting in one, through which the religion of Greece has continued to make its power felt even up to the present day.

The first wave of Greek influence in Rome dates back to the period of the later kings and the earlier years of the Republic.[1] At a still earlier date some of the Greek gods had come to be worshipped by the Etruscans ; and when the worship of Hercules in Rome by people from Tibur, or the worship of the Dioscuri by people from Tusculum, won recognition as part of the worship of the Roman state, these cults were not felt to be Greek, nor even foreign. On the other hand, the series of Greek cults introduced early in the fifth century at the instance of the Sibylline books were felt to be foreign. With the new duties assigned to the *plebs* came some new privileges, and over against the old worship of the patricians the state assigned a place to forms of worship in which all members of the state had a larger part. The story of the Cumaean Sibyl who offered Tarquin nine books of oracles, then six, and finally sold him three books for the price originally

[1] Cp. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, in I. Müller's *Handbuch;* and Aust, *Die Religion der Römer*, 1899.

asked for the whole collection, is familiar to all. Apparently the worship of Apollo was introduced from Cumae at the end of the sixth century, though his first temple in the *prata Flaminia* was not erected till 433 B.C. The worship of Demeter, Dionysus, and Persephone, under the Latin names of Ceres, Liber, and Libera, was established at about the same time; and their temple in the Campus Martius was erected in 493 B.C. To the same set of influences was due the worship of Hermes as Mercury (from *mercari*), the god of trade, to whom a temple was erected in 495 B.C., and the Greek cults of Hercules and of Neptune. None of these cults were admitted within the *pomerium*, and the forms of worship were felt to be foreign; although the names (except Apollo) were Latin, the nature of the gods was not Latin but Greek. In the case of Ceres, Liber, and Libera, the connection with the *plebs* is clearly marked, nor is it unnatural that outside influences should be felt through other elements of the population than the old aristocracy.

During the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. we hear of no more Greek cults established in Rome; yet again and again, in time of calamity, the state had recourse to the Greek ritual of the *lectisternium* under the direction of the Sibylline books.[1] Processions went about the city crowned with the laurel of Apollo, great sacrifices were offered, the temples, ordinarily accessible only to priests, were thrown open to the public, and a banquet was spread to three pairs of gods (Apollo-Latona, Hercules-Diana, Mercury-Neptune). The gods themselves were represented by draped wooden figures, reclining on couch and pillow at the banquet prepared for them. During this period, also, many temples were erected to the older and the newer gods, while games, dances, and even the drama came to have an important place in worship. But while Greek influence, no doubt, affected the worship of the old Roman gods, a sharp line was drawn between the native gods and those introduced from Greek cities; the locality of the worship was different, the *personnel* in charge of the worship

[1] Cp. Diels, *Sibyllinische Blätter*, 1890.

was quite distinct, and the ritual of the two types of worship was by no means the same.

In the third century other Greek cults were introduced into Rome, the cult of Aesculapius (Asclepius) on the island in the Tiber, the cult of Hades and Persephone, at the *Ara Ditis et Proserpinae in Tarento* (in the Campus Martius), and still later the cult of Venus Erycina on the Esquiline. These cults, like the *lectisternium*, were introduced to secure relief in time of dire calamity, and the immediate reason for recourse to such means of relief was supposedly found in the Sibylline books.

During the last two centuries of the Republic the pressure of Greek influence became so strong that in religion, as in literature, in art, and in philosophy, Roman traditions gave way before it. Neither tirade nor the example of men like Cato, nor the use of force, as in banishing philosophers, was sufficient to stem the tide. During the second Punic war, the direct demand for divine help broke down all barriers; Greek rites of propitiation were performed on a large scale; to the old Roman gods, as to gods more recently introduced, worship was offered in the Greek manner, in the hope that efficient aid might be secured from them in one way if not in another. Such a change was possible only because the hold of the ancient religion was gone; the fact remains that, to a considerable degree, Greek forms of worship had supplanted Roman forms of worship to Roman gods and in Rome itself. At the same time, the result of the change was in a measure nullified, for Roman worship could not have been changed if religion had continued to be a strong factor in the life of the people.

The demand of the times for more potent means of securing divine aid would not, in itself, have caused the introduction of Greek ritual rather than other eastern ritual, however great the authority of the Sibylline books, had not other influences been at work in the same direction. Greek art and Greek literature had found their way to Rome. "The poets, who were admired and imitated, based their work on belief in the Greek gods; the

works of art, with which temples, palaces, and public places were adorned, represented Greek ideals, ordinarily ideals of the Greek gods. It was impossible to speak Greek without exchanging Greek and Latin names for the gods, without confusing old Roman gods with the gods of Homer. Greek poetry could not be transplanted to Rome without bringing in its train Greek mythology. It was impossible to think of the gods in the form in which Pheidias and Praxiteles had represented them for their countrymen, without involuntarily replacing the old Roman idea of their nature with the Greek idea."[1] From Livius Andronicus on, the Roman gods were endowed with Greek myths in Latin poetry, and the drama made these conceptions familiar to the people. At the same time Roman temples were furnished with Greek images of the gods. Naturally, the old line of division between Greek ritual and Roman ritual could no longer be kept up.

Consequently when Julius Caesar encouraged the worship of the goddess of the Julian *gens*, it was not the Venus of Ardea, but a Greek Venus to whom he erected a temple. The patron of the empire of Augustus, the Palatine Apollo, was the Greek god who for nearly five centuries had been worshipped at Rome outside the *pomerium*. And when Augustus undertook to revive the old Roman religion, its texture was so shot through with Greek threads that it was quite as much a Greek as a Roman religion which he encouraged.

**3. Greek Religion and Christianity.** — The influence of Greek religion on Christianity is more complex and many sided than its influence on the religion of Rome. In this sketch one can only suggest (1) the persistence of Greek gods and Greek rites in Eastern Christianity, (2) the direct influence of Greek theological thought on Christian belief, and (3) the indirect but none the less permeating influence of Greek ritual on the very plastic ritual of the early church.

That in Greece itself ancient rites should persist under cover of

[1] Zeller, *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, 2. 105.

the new religion, and that ancient deities or heroes should reappear as Christian saints, is hardly surprising to one who considers the summary method by which Christianity became the established religion. It was not so difficult to make the Parthenon a Christian church when the virgin goddess of wisdom was supplanted first by a St. Sophia (Wisdom), then by the Virgin Mary. Similarly Apollo was more than once supplanted by St. George, Poseidon by St. Nicholas the patron of sailors, Asclepius by St. Michael and St. Damian, and in grottoes where nymphs had been worshipped female saints received similar worship from the same people.[1] It is suggested that the smaller metropolitan church at Athens, a church dedicated to St. Eleutherius, has replaced an ancient worship of Eileithyia; in any case women seek the aid of this saint in childbirth.[2] Where the ancient Greeks said, "Zeus rains," and regarded the thunderbolt as the weapon of Zeus, to-day men say, "God rains," and speak of the thunderbolt as his weapon.[3] That Dionysus should reappear as St. Dionysius, giver of the vine to Naxos, that Paul should take the place of Heracles as the person who freed Crete from noxious beasts, that Cretan legend even tells of a Christian Bellerophon, St. Niketas, who rides through the air on a horse with white wings, is perhaps more interesting than significant.

But to one who has been present when some old Greek rite has been celebrated by Christian priests, the persistence of the old religion is most vividly presented. Along with the bread and wine of the communion service, there may be found at times a *κόλυβα*, a cake specially prepared from different kinds of grain, which is brought to the church and eaten with greetings from each man to his neighbor after some crumbs have been scattered inside the altar rail.[4] The *πανσπερμία* is made of different grains and seeds and eaten at the sowing time, apparently as at the ancient Athenian

[1] B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, 46; Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, 37–38.

[2] Rouse, *ibid.* 237, n. 1.

[3] B. Schmidt, *ibid.* 33.

[4] B. Schmidt, *ibid.* 58.

Proerosia.[1] Votive offerings in Greek churches to-day bear a striking resemblance to those once offered in Greek temples.[2] It is said that in some parts of the Cyclades a coin for Charon is still

FIG. 72. — ATHENIAN BLACK-FIGURED VASE PAINTING (Loutrophoros from Cape Colias)

The loutrophoros is pictured as a grave monument on top of a tumulus with a mourner on either side.

placed in the mouth of the dead, and that a century ago the practice was widespread. Oftentimes an apple or some food is buried

[1] B. Schmidt, *ibid.* 61.

[2] B. Schmidt, *ibid.* 70; Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings, passim.*

with the dead, or a vase is broken at the grave, and the corpse of an unmarried girl receives the wedding crown to-day, just as in ancient Athens the marriage to Hades was symbolized by the *loutrophoros* (the vase in which the wedding bath was fetched). How far the modern processions and festivals (*πανηγύρια*) are the outcome of Greek festivals it is not easy to say, though when the *πανηγύρι* takes place annually at some small chapel in the country, there is occasionally evidence that an old hero-worship is being perpetuated. Certainly the Greek Easter festival seems to preserve the spirit if not the forms of the old Eleusinian worship.[1] In the spring, those who had shared Demeter's grief for the loss of her daughter welcomed the return of Persephone with all the joy that the returning life of vegetation might kindle. And to-day the Greeks mourn over the dead Christ, represented most realistically by a wax image borne through the streets on a bier; then at midnight before Easter Sunday the Metropolitan at Athens, the priest in smaller towns, comes out of the church announcing that Christ is risen; the light from his candle is passed to the candles of his companions and on to candles throughout the crowd, guns and firecrackers are discharged, and as they prepare to break their Lenten fast the multitude drop all restraint in the expression of wild joy.

A far more important effect of Greek religion on Christianity, in that it was by no means limited to Greece or to the Eastern Church, was due to the direct influence of Greek philosophy on Christian belief.[2] This matter deserves to be considered from the standpoint of Greek religion, not merely from the standpoint of Greek philosophy, for the philosophical ideas which come into play were based on the practices and beliefs of Greek religion; yet the present discussion will be very brief, for it is my purpose to point out the fact that Greek religious ideas bore new fruit in Christianity rather than to follow the process in any detail.

[1] B. Schmidt, *ibid.* 54 f.; Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im neuen*, 36 f.
[2] Cp. Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures* (1888), Lectures I, V, VII f.

It is perhaps necessary to note first that Greek philosophy produced a remarkable and far-reaching change in the concept of what Christianity was. For Christianity came into the world not as a new theology, but as a new principle of conduct. The demand for "salvation," salvation from the emptiness of life as well as from its wickedness, was answered in Christianity by reference to a person. In the words of Paul to the frightened jailer at Philippi, it said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."[1] But as Christianity was extended into the Greek world, it came into an environment totally different from that in Palestine. For centuries the Greeks had been developing the habit of speculating, of making definitions and laying down general principles, of testing a man's belief and practice by the dogma of the philosophic schools. It will be shown later[2] that the doctrine of God had been no less carefully elaborated in the schools than the conception of the physical world and of the world of human conduct. Now in such an atmosphere it was inevitable, if Christianity was to meet the demand of the Greek world, that it should be recast in a new mould. The first effect of Greek philosophy on Christianity was the rise of the habit of speculating about the fundamentals of the new religion, and the consequent habit of regarding speculative creeds as the real test to determine the genuine adherents of Christianity. This most momentous change in all the history of Christianity might have taken place if Greek philosophy had never busied itself at all with matters of religion; but inasmuch as philosophy had dealt for so long a time with Greek religion, the result was inevitable.

There is no question that the manner in which this change took place was determined by the speculation which for centuries had been devoted to the concepts of Greek religion. In a word, the idea of God in Christian theology was developed in large measure from the idea of God formed by Greek thought as to the Greek gods. The Greek conception of the nature of God at this time laid emphasis on the unity of God, his personality, and his good-

[1] *Acts* 16. 31.

[2] Part III, Chap. iii.

ness. The human, or superhuman, personality of the gods was nowhere more clearly grasped than in Greece, nor could any abstract philosophy entirely free itself from the prevalent belief of the people. But the unity of the world demanded a corresponding unity in God, as the poets first saw and the philosophers taught. The kindly nature of Father Zeus appeared clearly in Homer; it was perhaps the logical outcome of this poetic feeling to identify God with the good and the perfect, when philosophy undertook to unify the moral ground of the universe with the source of all real existence. Such was the range of ideas which went to make up the definition of God in Christian theology.

Again, the relation of God to the physical universe and to mind had long occupied Greek thought. Two fundamental facts, fate or destiny on the one hand, the providence of gods on the other, had always been recognized. The philosophical conception of one God raised questions as to the nature of matter and of evil, as to the immanence and transcendence of God, as to the relation of God to that process by which the world had come to be what it is. In order to bridge the connection between the supreme being and the world of sense, lesser spiritual beings, active divine ideas or a mediating Logos, were introduced between the two extremes. To explain the presence of evil under the government of a good God, it was assumed now that the good power was not all-controlling, now that evil was only a disguised form of good, or, again, it was accredited to human freedom. Thus a whole series of definitions and theories, developed out of Greek religion, were at hand ready to be applied to the Christian conception of God in his relation to the whole. The inner history of Christianity from the second to the fourth centuries was in the main a development of theology, in which the Greek idea of God that had been worked out by philosophy became fruitful for actual religion.

Thirdly, an elaborate ritual was at the same time being developed in the new religion. And here again the forces at work were mainly Greek; only that here there was no such intermediary as

philosophy, and the practices of religion could but gradually make their way across a barrier of intense hostility.[1] At the end of the first century the only ritual of Christianity was to be found in an extremely simple observance of the sacraments: the baptismal bath as the seal of entrance into the new kingdom, following a brief instruction as to the meaning of the new religion, and that common meal with special prayers for blessing on the wine and the bread by which men commemorated the last meal of Jesus with his disciples. By the fifth century all this simplicity had given way to a long and richly developed ritual. Baptism took place once a year, just before Easter, on "that mystic night," apart from any profane eye. The candidates had undergone a long novitiate of fasting, during which evil had been exorcised by half-magical means, and preparation had been made for the gift of new life. They came to the baptistry ungirded, without adornment, with bare feet, the women with their hair loosed — in Jerusalem, if not elsewhere, with veiled countenance and covered eyes. The water baptism, which symbolized purification from evil, was followed by an anointing with oil to symbolize the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then they came to the church which was ablaze with light, wearing garments of pure white linen, crowns on their heads, and candles or torches in their hands, and here at their first mass they received a mixture of honey and milk to drink instead of wine. Baptism was called the "dress of immortality,"[2] in that it was supposed to confer on men the eternal life; consequently it was often postponed until late in life when death and the next world seemed near at hand. Naturally these rites were more developed in some places than in others, but the general practice is covered by this statement.

Thus it appears the purpose of baptism, as of the Greek mysteries, was to assure blessedness in another world. Its direct result was not the forgiveness of sins, but rather the removal of

[1] Cp. Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures* (1888), Lecture X; and particularly Anrichs, *Das antike Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christentum*, 1894.

[2] Basil. Ep. 292, *ad Pallad.* (32, 1033), quoted by Anrichs, 181.

evil and the introduction of a better nature. The preparation for baptism had been made like the preparation for the mysteries, in that a considerable period was set aside as a novitiate in which purification, in particular purification from evil spirits, played an important part. And the rite itself had much in common with the initiation into the mysteries — its secrecy, the absence of anything like ornament, the veiled face, then the white linen garments and crowns and torches with the drink of honey and milk — the rite had become for the Greek an initiation, and it was frequently referred to by this name.[1]

The Lord's Supper also came to be called a mystery (*φοβερὸν μυστήριον*) as the result of the same set of influences. At a relatively early date a sharp line was drawn between the baptized and the unbaptized catechumens, for "eternal guilt" attached to those who partook of the Lord's Supper without due initiation; later there came to be degrees among the initiated themselves, as in the Greek mysteries. Next, the table on which the elements were placed was called an altar (*θυσιαστήριον*) and the elements themselves were called *μυστήρια*. Finally such words as "hierarch" (*ἱεράρχης*) for the Christian priests, and "enlightened vision" (*ἐποψία*) of sacred things, are taken over from the mysteries, and the transformation of the sacrament into a Greek mystery is all but complete.[2]

Thus the Lord's Supper, like baptism, assured one of blessedness in a future life; indeed, it came to be called an "antidote for death,"[3] a "viaticum mortis." Its magical power to impart the resurrection life was explained by the real presence of the Lord in the wine and in the bread; just as the divine life was shared by those who took part in such mysteries as those at Eleusis. Both the purpose of the rite and the means for securing this purpose had come to be very much the same as in the mysteries of Greek religion.

[1] Cp. Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures* (1888), 296.

[2] Cp. Dionysius Areop. *Eccles. Hier.* 3. 1. 1, p. 187 f., quoted by Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures* (1888), p. 304.

[3] Ignatius, *Ad Ephes.* 20. 2.

How such a change could take place when all the time a life-and-death struggle was going on between the old and the new religion is a question that does not concern us here. It is sufficient to point out that the change was very gradual, and that it could only have taken place on the unconscious assumption that "religion" meant the rites and conceptions which had been familiar to the Greek mind for centuries, while "Christian religion" meant a new content in the old form. The important fact for the student of Greek religion is that this religion was not blotted out by Christianity. On the contrary, whatever real life it had was perpetuated in Christianity, since the conquering religion had adopted many of its forms and some of the old content in these forms. In the centuries which followed much of this Greek element in Christianity was forgotten or forcibly removed; yet much still remains, a permanent contribution to what claimed to be a world religion, "where there is neither Jew nor Greek. . . .[1]"

[1] *Ep. Colossians* 3. 11.

# PART III

# RELIGION AND OTHER PHASES OF LIFE IN GREECE

## CHAPTER I

### RELIGION IN RELATION TO ART AND LITERATURE

**1. The General Connection of Art and Religion.** — In the earlier parts of this work the forms of Greek worship and belief have been studied, and the attempt has been made to sketch the lines of development for Greek religion. It still remains to consider its relation to other social forces; one must know its relation to art and literature in Greece, to morals and government, to philosophy; and in conclusion one may ask again how far Greek religion deserves really to be regarded as a form of religion. From this point of view the facts already presented require some further discussion even at the risk of occasional repetition.

Neither in the early days of Puritan New England at the one extreme, nor in ancient Greece at the other, can religion and art be regarded as wholly independent of each other. They are in truth two of the ways by which man seeks to adjust himself to the world in which he lives. As by science he interprets it in terms of physical law, so in art he is interpreting it in terms of his sense for beauty; and it is this same world which becomes intelligible, sympathetic, practicable, through his relation to the gods and through their worship. Among other peoples religious development has been largely determined, now by ethical demands, now by its relation to science and philosophy, rather than by the sense for beauty. In Greece art and literature were the means by which

men best laid hold of universal principles of truth and stated them for the eye to see or for the ear to hear. In music and poetry, in the dance, in the drama, as in sculpture and painting, it was some great fact of human life, often a fact understood to be religious, which gave to art its meaning. The effort of the artist for creative expression in form to be grasped by the senses is in contrast with the attempt of religion to deal directly with the spiritual and the ideal. But where, as in Greece, art was the one fullest expression for man's sense of the ideal, it necessarily was potent to shape religious thought and practice.

In a Christian service, held in some cathedral which centuries of art have labored to make beautiful, carried on with all the splendor of color and form, of tone and harmony, which Christian tradition has received at the hands of art, it is not easy to distinguish between the appreciation of beauty and the feeling of religious devotion. It was not at all easier to distinguish between the two emotions at a religious festival in the time of Pericles. The festival held the people because its forms and associations were supremely beautiful. Religious lyric and the drama, like music and the dance, were an actual part of worship. The house in which the spirit of the god found a home, its painted and sculptured ornaments, the votive offerings, the image of the god, formed the contribution of plastic art to religious worship. At every point sensitiveness to beauty of line and form and movement made its imperative demand on the worshipper. Little wonder, then, that enjoyment of the beautiful was so blended with pious devotion that no line can be drawn to separate them. If this is what is meant by a "worship of beauty," that somewhat ambiguous phrase might be applied to Greek religion.[1]

The fact remains that the Greeks did not directly worship any abstract conception of beauty, although their religion in the whole history of its development was determined by aesthetic influences. It was inevitable that the forms of worship should be modified in accordance with the nature of the worshippers to satisfy the spirit-

[1] In the same sense Hebrew religion might be termed a "worship of holiness."

ual need which they felt. Objects of worship, also, were brought within the sphere of art; images of the gods became the highest expression of the sculptor's power, and in time their divine beauty filled religion with a deeper meaning for the worshipper. Because the Athenian of the fifth century B.C. felt the power of invisible forces mainly through art, the gods assumed visible forms, gracious wisdom was seen in an Athena of Pheidias, and the modest charm of love in an Aphrodite by Alcamenes. The fifth century in Athens was a unique point in the history of religion, in that truly spiritual ideals, which were active in worship and belief, had not passed beyond the stage when they could be adequately expressed in concrete artistic form. Up to this time the gods had been too vague and indefinite, later the highest thought of the gods became too spiritual for such expressions; for a brief period high spiritual forces were conceived as gods who could be represented for human vision and with whom men could hold social converse. It was a passing moment, for such gods must yield to the analyzing touch of reason.

**2. The Influence of Religion on Art and Literature.** — In the preceding section on the history of religion in Greece the evidence of contemporary literature was considered at each step, on the ground that the reflection of religious ideals in literature was the most important record of that history. The testimony of painting and the plastic arts is hardly less important, though it bears rather on the nature of the religion than on the question of its historical development. The influence of religion on literature and on art may be considered from three points of view.

1. In the first place religion furnished the theme, not to say the content, for art and for literature. The conception of the particular god, already outlined in worship and in story, was the greatest conceivable theme for the sculptor; he could modify details, he could put more meaning into the conception as it reached him, but it was his task to represent for the worshippers a Zeus or, it might be, an Apollo. For temple decoration the stories of gods and giants, Lapiths and centaurs, Greeks and Amazons,

or some such local myth as that of the contest of Athena, invariably furnished the artist's theme. For literature from Homer on, this principle is true in only less degree. The divine world is as real for the epic as is the battlefield before Troy or the court of Odysseus at Ithaca. In the Theogony of Hesiod, in the religious lyric or the epinician ode, more than all in the drama, the real theme is religious and the content is in large measure derived from the stories which had grown up around gods and heroes.

2. Again, religious worship furnished the occasion which demanded the aid of art and literature. It was the religious festival which called for dance and music and lyric poetry to make its appeal truly effective for a people like the Greeks. Though not very much is known of the religious lyric proper, the choral odes still extant bear clear evidence of the religious gatherings for which they were written. In the case of the drama the religious origin and the persisting religious meaning are self-evident. Performed at a festival of Dionysus, beside his temple, in the presence of his altar and his priest, tragedy and comedy are the natural response to that Greek demand for the enrichment of worship by art. Nor should it be forgotten that the Athenians pressed the epic into this same service, making it enrich the festivals of Athena, as contests of lyric poetry enriched the festivals of Apollo, and the drama those of Dionysus. This demand on the part of religion was even more a directing force for the visual arts. Architecture was essentially the art of building temples, for here first was felt the need of noble buildings. Earlier Greek sculpture in the round was concerned for the most part with athletic types and other statues of human beings, made, to be sure, for dedication to the gods. But when, after some mastery of material had been gained, social and political changes created the demand for temple statues that should express with untrammelled freedom the highest conception of the gods, sculpture speedily attained its highest point of excellence. The demand ceased at length, statues of the gods were made primarily for decorative purposes, and art lagged without the religious impulse.

3. Thirdly, the influence of religion on art and literature was important in that it furnished a different point of view for the treatment of any theme which might be undertaken. It was characteristic of the Greek artist that he sought to express the great truths of human life in his achievements. This ageless, timeless quality in painting or sculpture or poetry finds a double method of expression, directly in its treatment of men, their experiences and relations, indirectly in its treatment of the gods. Sometimes it appears almost that the gods are the abstract ideals themselves, that Zeus is justice, Athena wisdom, and Aphrodite love. In decorative sculpture on temples and public buildings, in the great paintings which include the gods, on gems and painted vases with religious scenes, the subject is rightly termed "religious;" yet the underlying meaning of the artist's work is some principle of human life which in these instances he has expressed through the person of the gods. Similarly Greek myths, especially when they were taken up into poetry, became a vehicle for the expression of human truth in a divine world. The personal character of the gods, their relations to each other and to men constitute this divine world. In such a world or society on a higher than human plane the problems of human life are presented in another light; the aims, the struggles, and the laws of human existence are treated from a different standpoint. Oftentimes the divine world serves as a sort of background which gives man's daily life its proper setting, a background which throws out in higher relief both its evanescence and its real greatness. Elsewhere than in Greece the supreme reality of religion has often been emphasized at the cost of reality in man's daily life, or again the life of to-day has overshadowed the divine world; in Greece gods and men were wonderfully blended in one social universe. It is natural then that in Greece the same fundamental truths of life should be presented by the artist now from the standpoint of men, now from the standpoint of the gods. It is natural that here religion should furnish not only the theme and the occasion for the artist, but also a world in which human truth should find new and effective expression.

**3. The Influence of Art and Literature on Religion.** — If now we turn to the other side of the question and consider the influence of art and literature on religion, the connection is no less apparent.[1] In the outline of the history of religion in Greece the universalizing influences of poetry and in particular of the epic have been considered. Because the epic bard selected for his song those ideas and practices which had universal meaning, whatever influence he had was exerted to mould singular or local types of religion in the direction of one general type. In less degree lyric poetry and the drama and prose literature neglected the particular for the general in their treatment of religious themes. Even what was written for one city like Athens, or for one shrine like Delphi, because it adopted in a measure this general standpoint, helped to spread the conceptions of religion in a form that was universally understood. The effect of art in this direction was more limited. Yet since it was the mission of Greek art to grasp what was universal in its theme, even in a statue or a painting made for the shrine of local worship, the particular local features of the subject were forced into the background. Products of the lesser arts, like gems, seal-rings, coins, metal utensils, embossed metal decoration, or painted pottery, were not made for any one locality; inevitably religious subjects were given a general treatment, in which form they were circulated. The Athena head on coins of Corinth or of Athens, the head of Hera on coins of Argos, the temple of Apollo or the figure of Apollo on coins of Delphi, carried with them all over Greece these types of the gods until they became a national possession.

In connection with this universalizing influence of art and literature the tendency to omit or modify what is unpleasing in religion goes with the tendency to set aside what is purely local in its meaning. As for myth, it is not difficult to trace the process by which the ugly and the revolting yield to the demands of the aesthetic sense. Conservative as is religious practice, yet the demand that beauty and propriety be present

[1] Cp. "Literary Influence in the Development of Greek Religion," *Biblical World* (1898), 294 f.

exerts a constant pressure on the traditional forms of worship. The development of the drama is the one most striking example of the requirement that religious practice conform to an aesthetic ideal. In all forms of worship, however, what offends a trained taste gradually disappears before the orderly, dignified, more beautiful practices of a cultivated people. And in the conceptions which go with worship the negative effect of the aesthetic sense, throwing into the background or cutting out elements of barbarism, ever pursues the natural conservatism of religious thought. The result is that old, unbeautiful forms of religion remain in a city like Athens only when some peculiar potency is attached to them.

Apart from the somewhat general points thus far considered, the effect of art and literature on religion in the case of a people sensitive to their influence was inevitably so to modify religion that it should make a strong aesthetic appeal. This tendency may be traced along several different lines. In the first place the one most striking characteristic of Greek religion, its human gods and humanized worship, is both the result of aesthetic influences and a means through which religion appealed to the sense of the beautiful. The transformation of the vague powers once worshipped into actual gods, followed different lines among different nations. In Greece art and literature combined to define the gods as human in their nature; their greatness was limited to what the poetic imagination could grasp, their vagueness yielded to the demand for concrete form, and the form was inevitably human. The humanizing of the gods represents that same victory of human intelligence over natural forces which was so emphasized in myth. The poet and the artist saw in man something of the universal, the spiritual, the divine; in striving to express this side of humanity they found no other medium than the gods. When the highest aim of the sculptor was to make some image of a god, every success he achieved must have served to make the human nature of the gods more real. At times in the history of humanity religious thought

has denied the existence of physical nature or regarded it as unworthy of attention ; under the influence of art the forces in the world became for the Greek gods of human type, and the aesthetic appeal of nature was utilized for religion in the person of the gods.[1] And because the relation of god and man was so human, the forms of worship also were moulded by man's sense of the beautiful.

Working along these lines over against religious conservatism, it was the province of art, in the second place, to define and visualize religious conceptions.[2] However sharply myth be separated from religion, the nature of the gods as defined in myth and in poetry could never be without effect on the worshipper's thought of his gods. This definition of religious conceptions by an influence primarily aesthetic rather than ethical, was fully recognized by Plato when he proposed to exclude the poets from his ideal state. Much as it might be deprecated by philosophy, the fact remained as a most striking characteristic of Greek religion. Nor were painters and sculptors behind the poets in this work. Painting brought before men's eyes the story and the actors, myth and the gods connected with myth. True as it is that gods of myth rather than of worship were thus represented, the worshipper could not but feel the influence of these pictures. That Dionysus in the sixth century was pictured as a bearded man, in the fourth century as an almost effeminate youth ; that Athena was rarely represented without some piece of armor ; that the artist emphasized the mother in Demeter,

FIG. 73. — COIN OF NAXOS (about 460 B.C.)
Head of the bearded Dionysus; Satyr with wine cup.

[1] "In Greece, we may truly say, man pressed on through the dawn-gate of Beauty into the Land of Knowledge." Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, 972.

[2] Welcker, *Götterlehre*, 2. 111 and 120.

FIG. 74. — MARBLE STATUE OF DIONYSUS FROM TIVOLI (Terme Museum, Rome)

the wife in his treatment of Hera, must mean that the pictorial imagination of the worshipper followed along the same lines. When sculpture made the gods visible to worshippers in their temples, the influence of art on religion was at its height. That the Athenian habitually thought of his goddess in the form of the gold and ivory image which stood in the Parthenon is clearly proved by the minor products of art. So closely was the god identified with the image that the image of the god was bathed, anointed, clothed, crowned with garlands, etc., as part of the worship of the god. In Pharae the question of those who consulted Hermes was whispered in the ear of the image;[1] the Athenians were told at Delphi that the gods in their threatened temples were sweating in fear of the Persians;[2] the image of Athena in Siris[3] is said to have closed its eyes when suppliants were taken from her shrine by the victorious enemy. How far the god and the image were actually identified by the worshipper it is difficult to say; there can be no question, however, that the sculptor furnished the visual form in which alone men could picture their gods as they worshipped them.[4]

[1] Pausanias, 7. 22. 2–3. [2] Herodotus, 7. 140. [3] Strabo, 6, p. 264.

[4] The representations of Athena on Athenian reliefs furnish an excellent example of the manner in which a temple statue (the Athena Parthenos of Pheidias) determined the visible form of a goddess for her worshippers.

From the facts thus far considered, the fact that art and literature were the strongest forces to give the gods a divinely human personality, and the fact that they defined and visualized religious conceptions, we are in a position to understand something of the power which aesthetic ideals exerted to enforce and uplift religion. On the one hand a people sensitive to beauty were moulding religion and organizing its conceptions from the standpoint of the beautiful, on the other hand the religion thus moulded and organized gained in power because it satisfied the sense for beauty. All the power that epic poetry had to move its hearers was exerted to enforce its picture of the Olympian world; all the power of tragedy over an Athenian audience was bringing home to the people the religious conceptions of an Aeschylus or a Sophocles; whatever emotions were stirred by the choral hymn and rhythmic dance were utilized by religion to secure a hold on the worshipper. The splendid homes built for the gods in the sixth century and the fifth century, the tribute of architecture to religion, made the rule of the gods more real by preparing the mind of the visitor for worship. Because rhythmic harmony of line and a sense of restful unity were so satisfying to his eye, his mind was the more ready to accept whatever truth religion had to teach. His mind thus open to religious influence, the visitor might stand in the doorway of the later temple of Dionysus at Athens, and see before him the gold and ivory statue of the god by Alcamenes. Inevitably the ability of the artist to express the god's nature produced an impression quite as important for religion as it was for art itself. The temple and the statue at Athens were but part of a larger movement which aimed directly to utilize art in making religion more splendid. The aim of Peisistratus, or later of Pericles, was not primarily religious. The worship of Athena and of Dionysus was enriched by all the powers at the command of the statesman in order to satisfy the people by splendid pageant, to create a sense of civic unity, to break the power of political discontent by appealing to the aesthetic sense. The outcome of this movement, however, could but be the binding of art and religion in a closer

union. The content of religion was given a beautiful form which men could see and feel; the result was that the gods were interpreted to their worshippers, the practices of worship were made the vehicle of the artist's power, the ideals of religion were reënforced by every device at the command of the artist.

It is not quite enough to say that art, which had re-created the gods and moulded the forms of worship to express its ideals, was the strongest prop of religion in the great days of Athens. The artist, just because he was an artist, became for a people like the Greeks a prophet of religious progress. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* exhibit a strange power on the part of the poet to idealize the common life of man. This idealizing touch of Greek poetry, from Homer on, was a continuous influence on religion to give it a deeper meaning as well as a stronger hold on men. The painter brought to his pictures of religious themes his advancing ideals of beauty in line and composition and color. The sculptor learned the divineness of beautiful form in his efforts to portray the gods, and what he learned he taught to the public. Just because the artist in each different line was true to the principles of art, he was interpreting life in terms of the beautiful. The larger facts and ideals of human life, which are essentially religious, he was stating for an aesthetic people in an aesthetic form. In a word, it was not the philosopher, not the preacher of moral lessons, but rather the artist, who in the capacity of prophet ever directed popular thought to higher and truer religious conceptions.

Granted that the artist was seeking such a statement of religious problems, a statement which had far more influence in Greece than any other form of statement; granted further that art had a wonderfully direct and sane development in Greece up to the end of the Peloponnesian War, it is not difficult to understand his work as a prophet of religion. Each step of artistic progress was thereby a step of religious progress. The true and the good were more and more clearly stated in terms of beauty. The artist was the first, again and again, to obtain deeper insight into religion and to teach men what he had learned. Even to-day men

find this religious message to the world in the writings of Pindar and Aeschylus and Sophocles. Polygnotus's painting of the underworld at Delphi, we may well believe, presented a more profound view of the future life than had been attained before. As for the great temple statues of the later fifth century, we have abundant testimony that they showed an insight into the nature of the gods not previously gained, while at the same time they put their religious message in an aesthetic form which every one might feel. Thus we may accept the statement of Dio Chrysostom[1] that the revelation of the gods came to the Greeks not only through man's own nature and through the state, but also, though less directly, through the poet and the sculptor.

The change which began to come over religion in Athens during the latter part of the fifth century is not difficult to understand from this standpoint of art. Just because art represented infinite ideas in purely finite, human forms, art could be a power to interpret religious truth up to a certain point and no further. The change came along two lines. A rationalistic philosophy pointed out the inconsistency of human gods. Far more important in its effect than any philosophy was the tendency of art to use divine beings as mere forms to express conceptions human and not divine. So soon as art and religion were blended for an end purely aesthetic, so soon as images of the gods were made not for real worship, but as the traditional manner for the interpretation of human life, the artist was helping to break down religion rather than to build it up. The Hermes of Praxiteles is the type of this new spirit, a Hermes only because this god had represented an ideal type of youth, in reality the embodiment of Athenian young manhood as Praxiteles saw it.

[1] *Orat.* 12, p. 395.

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGION AND THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY

**1. Religion and Ethics.** — If it be the function of religion to create a living harmony between the human spirit and the essential reality of the universe in which man lives, there can be no absolute division between religion on the one hand and the organization of social life on the other. The organization of social life includes the state as a whole, minor groups within the state, and the principles of conduct which receive social sanction. In Greece, as elsewhere, neither ethics, nor social activities, nor the state are in any sense out of touch with religion.

The connection between religion and ethics in Greece is a little difficult to grasp because the meaning of both terms has shifted somewhat. For us ethics means the ideals of right conduct and the judgment of conduct by this standard; conscience is not a Greek idea, and the realization of "the good" received more emphasis than the avoidance of what is not "right." Even the Greek conception of justice (or righteousness) had far more of positive content than ours. It is not unnatural that for us "do no wrong" as a law of conduct should attract more attention and seem far more strenuous than "do what counts toward filling your place in society." So far as the conception of religion among the Greeks is concerned, the absence of dogma works with this different ethical standpoint to make it seem more foreign to our view.

If we follow the common practice and treat Greek mythology as religious dogma, the contradictions between morals and religion are glaring. There is good reason for excluding the poets from

an ideal Greek state with Plato, and for branding the teller of myth as grossly impious with Isocrates.[1] No effort of Pindar or Aeschylus could bring ideal harmony between myth and religious ideals; in the Homeric poems the difference between the religious rule of the gods and their mythological character is as really recognized as it is unobtrusively handled.

And if we turn from myth to religious practice, similar contradictions are found between ethics and worship. Human sacrifice seems to have been but slowly eradicated from certain rituals; licentious practices in worship were unusual and perhaps of foreign origin, yet in Athens the strict etiquette for woman was somewhat relaxed to meet the demands of worship; it cannot be disputed that temperateness gave way to license at some religious festivals. Evidently any attempt to identify moral and religious demands in our thought of the Greeks is doomed to failure.

In fact the connection of morals and religion can only be understood when first their essential independence has been frankly recognized. To put the matter bluntly, religion is concerned with a man's relation to his god, morals with his relation to his neighbor, or rather to the social group of which he is a member. The patriotic devotion of Hector, the straightforward energy of Achilles, the courage of Diomedes or Ajax, the shrewdness of Odysseus, were Greek virtues because they exemplified the demand of the community on the individual. Whatever strengthened the state and helped to make it lasting was crystallized into an ethical requirement. The murderer was killed or put outside the pale of society. The right to expose children perhaps dated from a time when it was demanded occasionally as a measure of self-preservation. On the other hand the care of orphans and the protection of weaker members of society were the outgrowth of that sympathy which binds together the community. Temperance, purity, truth, are the expression of social demands, not the outgrowth of any religion. One great interest of Greek ethics is that it developed in such freedom from the modifying influences of religion.

[1] *Orat.* II. 38–40.

Religion, on the other hand, had no cause to express moral sentiments, for it aimed to secure the coöperation of beings quite other than men. Until these higher powers were humanized, ideals of morality did not apply to them. And when the Homeric poems gave the gods an almost human personality, they still remained as much outside the control of a moral code as were human kings.

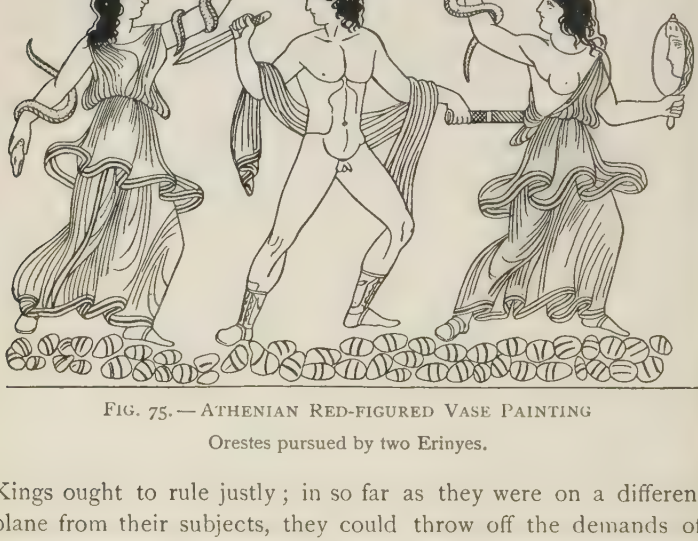

FIG. 75. — ATHENIAN RED-FIGURED VASE PAINTING

Orestes pursued by two Erinyes.

Kings ought to rule justly; in so far as they were on a different plane from their subjects, they could throw off the demands of personal morality. Naturally, a just rule was attributed to the gods long before any thought that a Zeus or a Hermes should exemplify the moral ideals of men.[1] It was true of Greek religion, if not of ethnic religions generally, that the earlier stages were quite independent of morality, except in so far as the self-preservation of society developed a moral obligation to worship the gods.

Not enough is known of the early history of Greek religion to trace in detail the development of a connection between morals

[1] Cp. Plato, *Euthyphro*, 5 E f.; *Politia*, 2, p. 378 B.

and religion. In the epic account of religion this connection is well under way, in that the rule of the gods on the whole makes for justice, and the caprices of the gods are modified by a sense of right, so far as men are concerned.[1] It is rather a striking fact, however, that the earlier religious expression of moral demands should not be in the gods of civic worship, but in beings quite apart from the Olympian world. Granted that Dike and Themis are purely allegorical figures embodying man's sense of justice, allegory would hardly be called on to express this ideal if it had already found adequate expression in Zeus and Athena and Apollo. The Erinyes were anything but allegorical figures. Rooted in the older stratum of religious thought, fearful beings that pursued those who transgressed certain laws, they represent perhaps the earliest supernatural punishment of wrong-doing in Greece. It is not improbable that the Erinyes developed from the idea that the souls of the dead pursued in vengeance those who had wronged them, and in particular that when a child killed its parent, the soul of the murdered person was relentless in its pursuit of the murderer. In the Homeric poems the Erinyes avenge crimes against the family and the social order generally. Telemachus dares not drive his mother from the house for fear of them[2]; they protect the rights of the elder brother[3]; the just curse of a father or mother they bring to fulfilment[4]; they protect the suppliant beggar,[5] they punish perjury and rash self-confidence,[6] they uphold the order of the universe.[7] In Homer,[8] as in later writers, their work of vengeance is not limited to this world, but continues in the underworld. In a word, the Erinyes are like personified curses, mighty to punish sin against the moral order of the universe. If the gods of ordinary worship regularly punished wrong-doing, this function would hardly be assigned to

[1] Zeller, *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, I. 3 f.; 2. 55.
[2] *Odyssey*, 2. 135.
[3] *Iliad*, 15. 204.
[4] *Iliad*, 9. 454, 571; *Odyssey*, 2. 135; 11. 280; cp. Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 1389.
[5] *Odyssey*, 17. 475.
[6] *Iliad*, 19. 259; Hesiod, *Erga*, 803; *Iliad*, 19. 87.
[7] *Iliad*, 19. 418; cp. Heracleitus, *Frag.* 29; Sophocles, *Trach.* 808; *Ajax*, 1389.
[8] *Iliad*, 19. 259.

avenging spirits; at the same time, the existence of such spirits indicated the demands of ethics for a supernatural sanction.

In the preceding chapter the work of literature and art in humanizing the Greek gods was discussed. One of the most striking cases of a human standard for divine beings is found in the Homeric account of the gods in relation to the order of the universe. Moira (often translated *fate*) is not any power higher than the gods, and therefore the ultimate background of the universe; it would be truer to call it the *conscience* of the gods. As men ought to uphold the moral order, ought not to act ὑπὲρ μόρον, so the gods feel under obligation to uphold the moral order of the universe. Because the epic makes its gods human, it endows them with moral sense, and thereby makes them uphold righteousness. From the epic point of view, then, the rule of the gods inevitably takes something of a moral character,[1] though nothing of the sort seems to have been intended by the bards themselves. That the same process should go on, that the gods should come to be conceived, not simply as righteous rulers, but also as righteous persons, would be the natural outcome of this process for a people which laid more emphasis than the Greeks on the ethical standpoint. In Greece, since religion was dominated by art rather than by ethics, only a few earnest thinkers demanded that their gods be moral persons.

Belief in the righteous rule of the gods was the natural outcome of another line of thought. The existence of natural law in the physical world and of eternal principles in the moral world early made a deep impression on the Greek mind. Even among savage races natural law and moral law are generally recognized, far as the content of these conceptions may be from the content which we assign to them to-day. The precepts in the *Works and Days* of Hesiod, or in the poetry of Theognis and Solon, embody the thought of generations on law and order in the physical world and in the moral world. At what point in the history of Greek thought the idea of a unified divine rule of the world arose it is

[1] Cp. *Iliad*, 3. 279; 16. 386; *Odyssey*, 17. 475.

difficult to say; in the Homeric poems there are traces of it in the use of the words θεός and οἱ θεοί; in the tragedians it is quite consistently recognized, though perhaps it never controlled popular thought. It was inevitable, however, that, wherever the divine rule of the universe was recognized, the belief in physical law and in moral law should be referred to the gods. If the universe rests on certain well-defined principles, while at the same time the universe is the expression of divine rule, those principles can but become the "unwritten, not-to-be-shaken laws of the gods, which no commands of human origin can supersede."[1]

Perhaps the strongest force in bringing religion and morals together was not the aesthetic humanization of the gods, or the philosophic demand for unity in the world, but rather the effort of the moral consciousness to secure the highest possible sanction for its standards. Where the simple promise was not sufficiently respected, the witness of the gods was invoked in the form of an oath; oaths were indeed evaded or directly broken at times, but the respect which was shown to the oath grew out of a belief in the religious sanction it afforded, for the state did not punish perjury. The Homeric poems refer not infrequently to hospitality as sanctioned by the gods. A man's legal rights were always confined to the limits of his own city or state. When he went abroad, he must appeal to the gods who protected strangers in order to secure entertainment or even safety; with hosts who honored the gods he enjoyed a cordial hospitality. The right of the suppliant was also an extra-legal right, based solely on respect for the gods. Pursued by the mob, a man could find temporary refuge in any temple, though certain shrines had a special right of sanctuary. This right, so far as we can learn, was administered to secure justice rather than to defeat it. Moreover, the murderer might ask for purification from blood as one of the rights of a suppliant in a foreign state. In a word there were rights not protected by the state, but generally recognized, for which the sanction of religion was specially invoked.

[1] Sophocles, *Ant.* 454 f.

The conception that all wrong-doing was rooted in a state of mind known as ὕβρις, *i.e.* a reckless self-assertion with no respect for the demands of propriety and decency, was perhaps the focus for the religious sanction of morality. This did not ordinarily involve the breaking of law, though it might lead to that in the end. It was rather the failure to recognize any social or religious requirements as binding on conduct. It might even be united with broad sympathy and noble purpose as in the case of Oedipus; none the less it led to rash violence, and under the rule of the gods it could but bring suffering and overthrow to the man who yielded to it. For a morality which judged action by the standard of fitness and propriety, this conception naturally summed up all man's tendencies to wrong. It could not be punished directly by the state; it was condemned as the root of evil by the social consciousness; its real force as a moral idea, however, was based on the religious belief that under the divine providence it worked out its own retribution.

The question has often been asked whether religion in Athens tended to make a man more pure, more true and genuine, more courageous, more just.[1] Probably its influence in this direction was neither strong nor consistent. Morality and religion, perhaps starting quite independently, came into contact at many points; in the minds of some great thinkers the lines between the two were all but removed; for the people the conception of right never blended with the conception of religion. It is evident that myth remained quite outside the pale of morality, and that worship was never necessarily moral. The fact remains that the rule of the gods came to be regarded as making for righteousness in that under their rule the sinner brought on himself the punishment of his own sin.

**2. Religion and the Social Group.** — The importance of Greek religion in connection with the structure of society was as far-reaching as the direct bond of religion and ethics was fluctuating.

[1] Cp. the "Prooemium to the Laws of Taleucus," as given by a late writer. Stobaeus, *Floril.* 44. 20, p. 279.

The typical social unit was a group of persons who believed in descent from a common ancestor (a god or hero), and who shared the same distinctive religious rites. Whether the unit were a small *gens* or the state at large, whether it were really based on blood relationship or rather on life in the same locality or on similarity of occupations, it was fitted into the same framework; *i.e.* a common, distinctive worship was developed, and some god or hero became the patron of the group if not the supposed ancestor of the members of the group. In the earlier Athenian organization there was doubtless some foundation in fact for the belief that blood relationship was a factor in uniting members of the *gens*, in connecting *gentes* into *phratries*, and phratries into tribes (φυλαί); it remains true that the common worship of each unit was as important a bond of union as the supposed blood relationship. With the reorganization of the state in the fifth century, not only the *gentes*, not only the new phratries and tribes of Cleisthenes, but also the local *demes* had each its divine patron and each its distinctive worship. In a word, each element in the political and social structure had the same framework, and that of a religious nature.

It was a natural result that other social groups adopted much the same framework, whatever their origin. The discussion of private worship[1] has shown how true this was of the family. The husband and wife were not united, as it were, by act of God. The blessing of the gods for this union, however, was devoutly sought and the family group had its own worship. The sanction of religion was even more important for the relation between children and parents than for the relation of husband and wife. Injustice or unkindness to one's parents was in itself an act of impiety, for which divine punishment might be expected. It was an essential duty of the pious man to offer respect and worship to his ancestors. Similarly the blessing of the gods was sought for the new-born child, and it was at length recognized as a member of the family, of the phratry, and of the state with religious rites. So much did religion contribute to the solidarity of the family.

[1] Part I, Chap. ii, p. 120 f.

Other forms of association were constituted in the same way. The "club" of young men at the palaestra were united in the worship of some Hermes or Apollo; the association at the Peiraeus of residents from some foreign city was a religious association, worshipping the god of their fathers; merchants uniting for trade, artisans joining in a "trade union," groups of actors or artists or philosophers, constituted their associations on a religious basis, since this was the one recognized type of social organization.[1]

The reaction of these facts on religion was twofold: inasmuch as each social group had its own worship and ordinarily its own patron deity, the separateness of different worships was emphasized; on the other hand the unification of the Greek world in its commercial, intellectual, and artistic interests tended to make the general conceptions of religion more alike and more widely intelligible. The great force in bringing the Greek world together was no doubt commerce. The sailor and the merchant, as they travelled from place to place with their wares, carried ideas as well as material wares from place to place. The fact that religious festivals were centres of trade is but the converse of the fact that ideas as to religion and right and beauty followed in the steps of trade. Greeks all over the world from the sixth century on were learning to understand each other. The result for religion was perhaps to place an undue emphasis on whatever was peculiar; rites which were somewhat alike, however, were merged into common types, separated only by place and by tradition as to the circle of worshippers. There is no doubt, further, that the emphasis on the individual in religion, which has been discussed in previous chapters,[2] was in large measure due to the emphasis on the individual in the commercial world.

It remained true that the circle of worshippers in any cult was strictly and definitely limited. It might be a wide circle, as in the worship of Zeus at Olympia; the cult might be hospitable to all Greeks, as in the worship of Demeter at Eleusis; or again it might be strictly limited to the few who lived in the same locality

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 127 f. [2] Cp. *supra*, pp. 231 f., 266.

or to those in whose veins ran the same blood. The principle remains that particularism in religion, the limitation of worshippers to a sharply defined group, was intimately bound up with the fact that each element in the social structure was conceived as having a religious basis.

**3. Religion and the State.** — Whatever was true of lesser social units was even more true of the state as a whole, in the same measure that the state was more important than the tribe or the family. As the family or the phratry claimed common blood from one divine ancestor, so the Athenians traced their descent from Ion or from an earth-born king; so, in fact, the whole Greek people claimed common descent from Hellen, the father of Dorus and Aeolus and the grandfather of Ion. Nor was this mere poetic fancy; it was regarded as a fact to this extent, that the naturalization of foreigners took the form of a (religious) adoption into the state-family, which was based on ties of common blood and common worship.

More than once it has been pointed out that Greek worship was a matter of local cults, each one theoretically independent. The common bond of unity is found, not in the mythology which brings the gods into one family, but rather in the state which controls these separate cults. Aside from the few cults which were in the hands of some section of the state rather than of the state as a whole, each shrine was a sacred spot where the state conducted worship in order to secure for itself the blessing of the god who could best be approached at that spot. The Greek state seems ordinarily to have developed through a union of many small communities (*συνοικισμός*); as this process went on, the cults of each community normally were adopted by the nascent state, and if they were situated at a distance from the capital, a branch-worship was often established there.[1] In either case the worship was offered in the name of the state. Individuals shared the worship, and of course the benefits of the worship, for the reason that they were the citizens who constituted the state.

[1] Cp. *supra*, pp. 217 f., 238.

It is evident that the modern conception of freedom of worship protected by the state, like the conception of a state-church, must be set aside as inapplicable. The state was itself the worshipper of the gods. The state attended to the administration of justice within its borders; the state maintained relations with other states; in the same way it was the business of the state to maintain relations with the divine powers. There was no "state-church," for the reason that religious worship was itself a function of the state from the time when the palace was the central sanctuary, the king the only priest, down through all the history of Greece.

As the representative of mankind before the gods, the state directed and controlled religion. When the worship of Dionysus was brought to Athens from Eleutherae, it was undoubtedly done by act of the state; when Pan claimed the homage of the Athenians at the time of the battle of Marathon,[1] it was an appeal to the state; when the worship of Athena Nike on the Acropolis was revived and her temple built, it was done by a state decree which is still extant[2]; when foreigners desired to institute the worship of their native gods, a special decree gave the necessary permission.[3] The appointment of priests, their duties, and their privileges, were determined in general by religious traditions; the state, however, might exercise its power to make any changes that were deemed best, for the priests were but agents of the state, to perform its worship at the different shrines. Similarly the forms of worship were handed down from the past as forms which had proved pleasing to the gods. Funds to build a temple or carry on a worship were voted by the state when necessary, and temple accounts might be audited like other accounts of the state.[4] Even the administration of religious law was in the hands of state courts. Sacrilege, such as the mutilation of the hermae or the profanation of the Eleusinian mysteries, was essentially a

[1] Herodotus, 6. 105; cp. 7. 189. [2] Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 911.
[3] *C.I.A.* II. 168; but cp. Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 170 f.
[4] *E.g. C.I.A.* I. 354.

matter for the state to deal with.[1] The Athenian assembly was free to relieve Alcibiades from the charges of sacrilege, and to revive them again at will. The contrast between established religion and private "mysteries" outside this pale only serves to emphasize the fact that public religion was a function of the state. Such being the case, the direction and control of religion was of course in the hands of the state authorities; in religious matters as in civil matters the state was only limited by that body of custom and tradition which may be called the constitution.

The connection between religion and government went one step further in the case of shrines the influence of which was not confined to one particular section of the country. The control and protection of these shrines was in the hands of groups of states which united for that purpose. Whether such groups were vague and all-inclusive, merely an agreement not to interfere with worship at such a shrine as that of Zeus at Olympia, or whether they were definite political bodies like the Aetolian league, the principle remains the same. Where the religious unit is larger than the political unit, a political unit is formed to carry on the interstate worship, for there is no such thing as a "church" apart from the family, the tribe, the nation, or the amphictyony.

For the state this connection with religion meant the blessing of the gods on its undertakings and the sanction of the gods for its requirements. Tradition assigned the origin of the laws of Solon and of Lycurgus to the Delphic god[2]; in other words a divine origin was claimed for state institutions. The oath, *e.g.* the oath on taking office, was an appeal for divine sanction. Treaties rested on the same basis, since the curse of the gods was invoked on the state which broke the treaty, and the records were set up in some important shrine. In Athens the temple of Athena on the Acropolis was the state treasury; nothing could better illustrate the identity of church and state, or the bond which united

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 263; Demosthenes, 22, 27.

[2] Plutarch, *Solon*, 14, p. 85; Herodotus, 1. 65.

Athena with the fortunes of Athens, than this practice by which the goddess, as it were, assumed the care of the state funds. On the Greek coins it was long customary to place the symbol of the god who was patron of the issuing city: Athena on coins of Athens

FIG. 76. — MARBLE RELIEF IN ATHENS

Athena representing Athens, and Hera representing Samos, clasp hands above a tablet on which the treaty is inscribed.

and Corinth, Hera on coins of Argos, Zeus on coins of Arcadia and Elis. The representation of the god or of his symbol was practically intended to mean that the god, and the state that worshipped this god, guaranteed the money standard. Nor was it only on coins that the god stood for the state. On the top of the tablet recording a treaty between Athens and Samos we may see

Athena and Hera clasping hands, a union of the two goddesses to symbolize the union of their respective states.

When the god actually stood for the state, it is no wonder that an attack on belief and worship should occasion the charge of political treason; no wonder, on the other hand, that Athenian orators should appeal to a blind confidence in the care of the gods for their city. To go into battle without first obtaining favorable omens was thought sacrilegious, even though men like Demosthenes were said to neglect this precaution.[1] Important matters, such as relief from pestilence or the means of meeting the Persian invasion, were referred to the oracle at Delphi. The state which honored its gods could but expect their guiding and protective favor.

In later Greek thought much stress was laid on religion as a device for upholding the authority of the state.[2] Fear of the gods and of punishments they inflicted before and after death was held up as an essential motive for obedience to law. Religion thus was treated merely as a useful superstition (δεισιδαιμονία), instituted by clever law-makers to keep unruly men in subjection to the state. This view never met with universal acceptance. It was simply an imperfect statement of the truth that religion was a tremendous force acting in favor of the existing order. Tradition, prescribing methods of divine worship, involved the belief that this worship was efficacious to secure divine blessing on the community. The whole conception of the moral order and the political order was bound up with this tradition. Though religion was no clever device of ancient law-makers, all the power of religious conservatism was exerted to uphold the state which was in harmony with its dictates.

One indirect result for the state from this view of religion cannot be entirely passed over. Inasmuch as worship was the concern of the state, all the splendor and magnificence lavished on worship

[1] Aeschines, 3. 131.

[2] See Sextus Empiricus, 9. 2. 17 f.; Cicero, *De nat. deor.* 1.42/118 f.; Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, 2. 45 f.

redounded to the honor of the state itself. The temples erected at Athens in the fifth century were splendid monuments for the gods, monuments which must have evoked the pride of Athenians in their city. The reorganization of worship, which enriched it with processions and contests, with feasts and spectacles, united the city in other emotions than such as were distinctly religious. Common worship was a natural bond for the Greek state. Beauty and magnificence in the forms of worship, wholly apart from their religious influence, were effective means to develop in the state a consciousness of unity and an honorable pride, if not real patriotism.

For religion this connection with the state was no less important than it was for the state. This magnificence of outward form begot no spirit of earnest belief as an antidote to the new factors which were intruded into the older worship. It is not difficult to trace the process by which the sense of beauty began to raise religion to a higher plane, until the same sense for beauty aided by wealth and civic pride checked the nascent spiritual forces to which it had given birth. Athenian religion could not serve God and mammon; it could not attain true spiritual meaning and at the same time express the glory of Athens to the Greek world.

The fact that worship was primarily an act of the state (or of some social unit within the state) of course tended to check individualism in religion. The sinner brings divine wrath on the state, and his punishment is due from the state rather than from the god himself. Thus piety becomes a part of civic duty instead of an individual relation with the gods. The sense of personal sin, faith in a god who cares for the individual, love for a god which serves as the impulse to personal service, could hardly develop. Where this individual relation was sought, for example, as an act of mystic communion with the divine, it must be sought outside the regular channels of established religion. Accordingly the development of individualism worked in two ways: it encouraged those forms of worship which did not have the sanction of the state, and in the end it tended to deprive the state worship of any

genuine religious feeling. When the civic consciousness was at its height, however, as in the period following the Persian wars at Athens, religious emotion could flow unhindered in the channel which was marked out for it by the natural lines of social development in Greece.

At its best the Greek conception of religion as a function of the state produced noble results. It meant that religion could not be any selfish matter, for it benefited primarily the state and not the individual. It meant that religion did not occupy any small section of a man's life, like a religion that is only valid on Sunday, for it had no separate place in his life. Moreover, it served to combine and express all that was ideal in human nature; patriotism and sympathy, love of the beautiful in art and literature and music, the sense for right and reverence for what is noble — in so far as these things were known to the Greek they found natural expression in the religion of the state at its best. The relation between the individual and the state, which was needed for such a development of Greek religion, was anything but stable; the development of individualism in Athens ultimately undermined both the state and the meaning of the state religion.

# CHAPTER III

## RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

**1. Early Greek Philosophy; Criticism of Religion.** — Where religion is so definitely a function of the state as in Greece, one might expect to find the priests exercising the ultimate power in government and demanding conformity to the statement of belief which they formulated. Nothing could be further from the truth. The priests were but citizens who might be called on for public duty, one at one religious shrine, another at another. As for a creed, the notable absence of anything of the sort was pointed out in the Introduction (p. 23 f.). The only norm of worship or of belief was the tradition or custom (*τὸ νόμιμον*) which had proved its rightfulness by the test of long experience.

The absence of creed or dogma certainly does not mean the absence of the element of belief in Greek religion, even if such a thing were conceivable. Worship would have been quite meaningless unless it fitted in with a philosophy of life which stamped it as efficacious. It is evident at once that mythology was not the statement of this belief. In a religion without formulated creed, actual belief can only be ascertained by a study of the worship to which it is the counterpart.[1] In the chapter on the Greek gods, an attempt was made to state this belief. It now remains to consider the connection between the practical belief or "working creed" and the general conception of the universe which in the course of time was formulated and defined by the great philoso-

[1] It has sometimes been held that in the epic worship is described as out of touch with belief. Such a state of affairs is hardly conceivable. The truth is that the epic stories of the gods are somewhat out of touch with the belief implied in the account of worship.

phers of Greece. One of the most important phases of Greek philosophy was its attempt to state the conceptions which underlie and justify religion; perhaps the strongest influence of Greek religion in later civilization has been through the vehicle of philosophy. It does not fall within the scope of the present volume to consider this philosophy of religion. The two questions which must be considered are: (1) the debt of philosophy to religion, and (2) the reaction of philosophic thought on popular belief and worship.

In the Homeric poems there is little or no trace of philosophy proper, little or no conscious reflection on human life and on the universe at large. At the same time the attitude of man toward the world, as pictured by the poet, is full of promise for the future development of philosophy.[1] The world, including man, is treated as a harmonious whole under the rule of the gods; the account of this world is marked by reasonableness and sanity and simplicity; a genuinely Greek sense of proportion has left its stamp on the whole picture. The world and human life are explained in terms of divine beings. The unity of the world is clearly reflected in the unity of the divine rule, and "natural law" is dimly suggested by the conception of Moira.[2] These gods of Homer are not objects of fancy nor mere physical powers; they represent rather the idea that the controlling forces in the world are akin to man in their essential nature. Aristotle[3] quotes other thinkers as holding that the early poets (including Homer) anticipated the philosophy of Thales in the statement that Oceanus and Tethys were the parents of the gods. With reference to the point here under discussion the testimony of the Homeric poems is far more important in another direction, viz. as showing how myth paved the way for philosophy in its relation to religion. The fundamental conceptions of unity in the world, of laws of nature, and of an ideal background for nature and human life, are outlined in the epic picture of the gods.

[1] Cp. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, 1. 41 f. [2] Cp. *supra*, p. 310.
[3] Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1. 2, p. 983 b. 30; *Iliad*, 14. 201, 246.

In the *Theogony* of Hesiod totally different subjects are handled from much the same standpoint. The poet's acknowledged purpose is to explain the origin of the universe; since the world is regarded as the expression of divine beings, the explanation takes the form of a theogony. It is clear that the desire for explanation is a philosophical motive and that the questions proposed are much the same as those which will engage the attention of the later philosopher; the method of treatment remains, as for Homer, primarily mythological. That the beginning of things is "Chaos," that the active principle in development is Eros, that the development of the world is an orderly progress broken by significant crises, that moral forces intervene and moral beings (*e.g.* Nemesis, Themis, Dike) appear in the list of divinities[1] — would seem to indicate that the poem includes some results of serious reflection. These results are not directly in line with religious belief, while at the same time they are in no way opposed to it, and indeed the terms in which they are stated are terms of religious thought. Almost the same thing may be said of the later theogonies, for they too use religious terms for ideas that are on the verge of philosophy, and they do not conflict with established religion. That reflection as to the world and man should move thus freely within the sphere of religion and mythology, is as significant for religion as it is for the future development of philosophy.

With the beginning of philosophy proper in Ionia the problems remain much the same; while the attitude toward established religion varies, these problems are answered not in terms of divine beings, but in a much more abstract manner. There is the same effort to discover the fundamental unity of the world, but the result is attained by positing some "first principle" — water, or fire, or some more fundamental substance still — out of which is developed the world as we know it. The same interest in the process of development continues, only it is now treated as a development from this one fundamental being to the complex

[1] *Supra*, p. 228 f.; Decharme, *La critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs*, pp. 14, 19.

world of phenomena. And the idea of an intelligent law governing this process, which has been more or less clearly outlined in earlier poetry, is emphasized, for example, in the Necessity of Anaximander, the Measure of Heracleitus, the Nous of Anaxagoras.

This nature-philosophy did not necessarily involve any direct attack either on myths or on the ideas of the gods in connection with worship. The advent of this new type of thought meant simply that the search for causes, which had been satisfied by an answer from religion, was now turned in a different direction, or at least formulated its thought in different terms. Thales is reported as saying that the world is full of gods,[1] but he explains the phenomena of nature — earthquakes, the movements of the heavenly bodies, vegetable and animal growth — in terms of a "first principle" which has nothing to do with the gods. If Anaximander accepted the gods as beings who lived far longer than men, or Anaximenes said that his first principle (air) was a god,[2] these statements were quite apart from their explanation of the world, for which gods were not needed. Although Heracleitus and Empedocles made much of religion, the gods of public worship were not the ultimate principles that underlie the universe ; for Parmenides the gods apparently belonged in the realm of opinion, not in the realm of pure being; Anaxagoras perhaps did not directly attack religion, but his philosophy had little or no place for the gods. Even Democritus, the contemporary of Socrates and in his far-reaching studies the precursor of Aristotle, has no different standpoint in his treatment of religion. For him, as for Empedocles, the gods were celestial spirits (not immortal) who work for the good or evil of man, spirits who have hardly a more important place in cosmic development than has man himself. Popular belief was allowed to remain as a thing apart from philosophy, while its foundations were completely undermined.

Three of these early thinkers took a positive attitude toward mythology and popular religion. Xenophanes with unsparing irony attacked the anthropomorphic gods, gods that a red-haired or

[1] Aristotle, *De anima*, I. 5, p. 411 a. 7. [2] Cicero, *De nat. deor.* I. 10/26.

snub-nosed race would picture in their own image, gods that were born and could weep, gods that the poets described as immoral. Heracleitus with equal vehemence makes fun of popular superstition both in belief and in worship. Yet neither Xenophanes nor Heracleitus were ready to discard religion from their scheme of thought. It was reserved for Empedocles to give the gods a definite place in his system as beings far greater than men, though not immortal, and to undertake an actual reform of public worship. Here Empedocles was following in the steps of that great religious thinker Pythagoras. Just how much of the so-called Pythagorean philosophy dates back to Pythagoras it is not easy to say;[1] it is clear, however, that he was a great religious and ethical leader who entirely reorganized religious practice for his followers in accordance with a system of belief which had nothing to do with the epic account of the gods. That there was one divine being of purity and holiness; that the soul of man came from God and was destined to return to its source only by strenuous, long-continued effort to escape from evil; that all human life should be dominated by this high endeavor, — such were the principles of his system. By its adoption of certain early Greek practices as well as by its high ideals Pythagoreanism gained a place in the Greek world, and in the course of time some ideas which it had included became fundamental for the philosophical account of religion.

In Athens itself philosophic discussion found small lodgement before the middle of the fifth century B.C. Earlier in this century, as has been shown,[2] there was a tendency on the part of poets in Athens (as elsewhere) to criticise religious conceptions from the standpoint of ethics. Although this movement was inspired by conscious reflection on human conduct, it was hardly systematic enough to be termed philosophical. It is only to be noted that the first criticism of religion came as it were from within, from poets inspired by religion itself. Moreover, such criticism was not connected with any popular interest in the study of philosophical problems.

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 247.

[2] *Supra*, p. 256 f.

It was Anaxagoras who "first established philosophy in Athens" about the middle of the fifth century. Frankly pursuing the early Ionian method of neglecting religion, he might well have given a physical explanation of the heavenly bodies (known as gods in myth) without serious challenge, had it not been for his connection with Pericles. That he was impugned as an atheist and obliged to leave Athens is merely a hint of the sharp conflict between religion and philosophy soon to follow.

Up to the middle of the fifth century B.C. philosophy had treated religion with utmost freedom, not causing any scandal because it gained little or no hold on the community. But about this time conditions changed in Athens. The so-called Sophists found a cordial welcome; in the relatively small community a considerable party of intellectual men were deeply affected by a philosophy that for the time being was a disintegrating force in politics, morals, and religion, yet over against this party of the new thought the old religion was still vital enough to rally a strong body of supporters; moreover, the political ferment was such that any question affecting the tradition of the state was easily made a matter for state action.

In his treatise on the gods Protagoras is quoted as saying that it was impossible to know the gods, whether they exist or whether they do not exist;[1] Thrasymachus went so far as to declare that if the gods existed, they were as useless for man as if they did not exist. Explanations of religion were offered, — that gods were suggested by beneficent forces of nature (Prodicus),[2] that stories of the gods were allegories (Antisthenes the Cynic), that gods were deified ancestors (Euhemerus, about 300 B.C.). A more radical explanation is credited to followers of the early Sophists in Athens, namely, that the gods were an invention of clever statesmen to make men fear hidden crime — a "useful lie." Such an opinion is outlined in a fragment from the *Sisyphus* of Critias,[3] a tragedy in which impiety is set forth with skill and detail only to

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 262 f. Diog. Laer. 9. 51; Plato *Theaet.* 162 D.
[2] Cp. Sext. Empir. *Math.* 9. 18. 51.
[3] Nauck, *Trag. graec. frag.* p. 771.

find a most conventional overthrow at the end. The contrast between life according to nature (φύσει) and life according to humanly imposed principles (νόμῳ) was fundamental with the Sophists; it only remained to class religion with conventions devised and imposed by man, to bring it under condemnation. This last step was taken covertly by Critias,[1] more openly by the "atheists," such as Diagoras and Hippo.

When philosophic thinkers explained away the reality of religion and won credence for a non-religious theory of the world, complete tolerance by a state that called itself religious was absolutely impossible. In the series of cases where men were charged with impiety,[2] it is clear that the Athenians found it necessary to protect from attack the practices of public worship, and that public denial of the gods was not permitted. So long as philosophy neglected religion, it had aroused little or no opposition; when its followers arrayed themselves against religion, they met the penalty of arraying themselves against the state.

**2. Plato and his Successors; the Philosophic Statement of Religion.** — Socrates, a devout man put to death on the charge of impiety by a people that saw only the negative side of his work, laid the foundation for a philosophy which gave full place to the fundamental principles of religion. In his confident search for the knowledge he claimed not to possess, he professed to act in obedience to a divine call and with a definitely religious aim. As for this faith that there is an absolute truth behind the visible universe, and that it is identical with goodness, are not these the ideals which Greek religion had stated, however dimly, for the people? The faith of Socrates, interpreted and developed by his successors, reëstablished on a philosophic basis not only science and ethics and politics, but also religion. To recognize the existence and validity of general ideas meant the end of that philosophy which found no truth outside the consciousness of the individual. It

[1] Reputed an "atheist," cp. Andocides, *De myst.* 47; Philostratus, *Vita soph.* 1. 16. 1.

[2] Cp. *supra*, p. 262.

involved the recognition of ultimate ideals which could only be understood in the light of religion. However great the gulf between these ideals and the actual religion of the Athenian state, such a philosophy was on a totally different plane from the philosophy which had neglected or attacked existing religion.

It need therefore be no surprise that Plato so frankly accepted traditional worship, and even religious teaching from many sources, however sharply he criticised the mythology of the poets. The picture of Cephalus in his home, sacrificing to Zeus,[1] stands in sharp contrast with the attacks on religion by the later Sophists and their followers. In the *Republic*[2] questions of worship are respectfully referred to the oracle at Delphi; the same respect for the oracle, and for seers generally, is found in the *Laws*,[3] though here Plato takes up quite in detail the religious institutions of the city. Hestia, Zeus, and Athena are to be worshipped in the centre of the city; each tribe and each class of citizens is to have its god; temples and divine images and priests are to be established; in the religious calendar no day will be without sacrifices to the gods.[4] Much or little as this may mean, it evidently means that Plato recognized the importance of the popular worship and gave it full place in an ideal state.[5] He was an out-and-out opponent of the "atheism" which had had a certain vogue in the Athens of his earlier years.[6]

Perhaps it is fair to say that Plato's interest in worship is quite as much theological and even sociological, as it is distinctly religious. He is unsparing in his criticism of the mythology of the poets, but his standard for testing myth is his theological conception of divinity, a conception based on earlier thought, on the imagination of the poets, most of all on ideas connected with actual worship. In the second and third books of the *Republic* Plato develops this conception of God, as over against the

[1] *Politia*, 1, p. 328 C; cp. *Lysis*, 207 A.
[2] *Politia*, 4, p. 427 B.
[3] *Leg.* 8, p. 828 A; 5, p. 738 B, C.
[4] *Leg.* 5, p. 745 B; 8, p. 828 C; 8, p. 828 D, E and 6, p. 758 E.
[5] Cp. *Leg.* 2, p. 653 D and 5, p. 738 D.
[6] Cp. *Leg.* 10, pp. 891 B, 888 A, 908 B. f.

representation of the poets: (*a*) God is absolutely good, and therefore the cause only of good, not of evil; evil is sometimes concealed good, as in punishment, or else it does not come from God; (*b*) God is absolutely simple and true; He does not change His form, nor does He deceive men. That the gods dispute and fight with each other, that they are capricious in dealing with men, that they are immoderate in appetite or passion is contrary to the very idea of God as conceived by Plato. Gods who can be bribed by gifts or moved by incense and petition are no more gods than if, on the other hand, they are to be conceived as absolutely indifferent to human needs.[1] In this theology he is simply carrying out in a consistent way what poets like Pindar and Aeschylus had attempted before; yet Plato's method is not quite the same, for he develops his conception of God systematically before applying it to poetic myths. It is definitely a theology, worked out on the basis of popular belief and used as a standard to judge popular story.

The theology thus far considered has served primarily a negative purpose, viz., to be a standard for the criticism of popular errors. In so far as we can speak of a Platonic system of thought, this conception of God is identified with the Idea of the Good which is pure Being, the ultimate source of the world of thought and the world of things. Whatever reality may be assigned to gods of popular faith, a question which is not clearly treated, they are subordinate to this ethico-logical Being. While Plato's theology is based on Greek religion, it had little or no power to affect popular belief. Philosophy, the effort to reach truth and reality and goodness along the path of knowledge, became itself the religion of his followers. The connections which Plato established between philosophy and religion often reappeared in Greek thought, and exerted a profound influence in shaping the theology of the Christian church.

The religion of the people found little place in the systematic philosophy of Aristotle. Even as a sociological phenomenon it

[1] *Politia*, 2, p. 364 B ff.; *Leg.* 4, p. 717 A; 10, p. 909 B.

attracted much less attention than might have been expected. At the same time Aristotle freely uses the name of God for the intelligent Being which is fundamental in the universe, at once the First Cause and the Final Cause in the world of things. Like Plato, Aristotle finds it necessary to assume a first principle, eternal, good, intelligent, and in this principle he discovers the truth which popular religion had dimly grasped in its imperfect conceptions of the Divine. The "cosmological argument" for God's existence, viz., that the chain of causes in the world demands a first cause, and the "teleological argument," viz., that the evidence of purpose in the world is only to be explained by assuming that the first cause acts with intelligent purpose, have been passed on to Christian theology in much the form that Aristotle gave them.

The later philosophy of Greece presents little that is new on the point now under discussion. Belief in the gods is rarely attacked, even by the so-called sceptics,[1] who attack the philosophic arguments for the divine existence. The atomistic philosophy of the Epicureans leaves no opportunity for gods to interfere with the course of events in the world. None the less, Epicurus and his followers assumed the existence of gods, spirits of finest matter who are untroubled by thought of man or any other care. That men should fear them or bring petitions to them involves a wrong idea of the gods; the wise man's worship consists in admiration for their ideal beauty and in contemplation of their perfectness.[2] Although the Epicureans were far from denying the importance of religion, this worship of the "wise man" stood in such sharp contrast with the old worship practised by the people, that some antagonism necessarily developed.

The Stoics alone among these later schools of thought made a serious effort to deal with philosophy in its relation to religion. The gods of popular worship were accepted by the Stoics, as by the Epicureans, and explained as beings higher than man, which

[1] *E.g.* Carneades; Sextus Emp. *Adv. math.* 9. 137 f.
[2] Lucretius, 3. 18 f.; 5. 147 f.; Diog. Laer. 10. 123 f.

had no great importance in the theory of the universe. Myths of the gods were assigned more importance as allegories that taught moral lessons or truths about processes in nature.[1] The religion of the philosopher, however, was on a different plane.

The fundamental principle of the Stoic thought was a pantheistic materialism which made physics the basis of philosophy, and theology a branch of physics. The world process was a cycle, from the original divine fire to air and water and earth and the universe we know, and again from this universe back to fire. The divinity was none other than material fire; but the presence of consciousness in man proved that the divine was also conscious, while the perfect beauty of the world and the perfect adaptation of means to ends proved that the governing power was intelligent. This God, the ultimate source of all things, and the intelligent force present in all, it was the business of the philosopher to know and to worship. Evil was explained away or denied, for the immanent God was perfectly good. The reality of religious sentiment among the Stoics is evinced by the Hymn to Zeus (for this pantheistic God is called Zeus) of Cleanthes.[2]

Later developments of Greek philosophy, in particular the effort of the Neoplatonists to revive philosophical religion as over against Christianity, may be passed over here. Though the forms of Greek worship possessed a wonderful tenacity, their hold on the thinking public rapidly grew weaker after the Peloponnesian war until the philosopher felt that he had fully satisfied their demands by assigning to the older gods some minor place in his system. The importance of the movement here under discussion, as has already been pointed out, is to be found not in Greece itself but rather in the history of Christian theology. Greek religion of the fifth century had enough reality and vitality to persist in forms of worship and superstition even to the present day;

[1] Cp. Cornutus, *Theol. graec. compendium.*

[2] Quoted in Stobaeus, *Phys.* 1. 2, p. 30.

and furthermore it furnished content to a philosophy of religion which was passed on to the Christian church and which still influences Christian thought. It was the truth in Greek religion combined with the fearless freedom of Greek thought which produced this heritage for a later civilization.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF GREEK RELIGION

**1. "Monotheism" in Greece.** — Until recently writers who have discussed Greek religion as distinct from Greek mythology have ordinarily sought for evidence of Christian ideas in Greek literature instead of studying Greek religion for itself. In the present volume this course has been avoided; the effort has been rather to treat Greek worship and belief from the Greek point of view. In conclusion perhaps we may fairly ask again whether the word "religion" has been rightly used, whether the phenomena under discussion do satisfy our idea of religion. Many of them do not; these, having been frankly stated, may for the moment be neglected. The religious practices and ideas of the people at large are for the most part crude enough; here again we are justified in turning away for the moment from the majority to the few in whom religion found its higher expression. Though these few persons are not a fair test by which to judge the meaning of Greek religion, nevertheless it is most unfair in art or literature, in politics or ethics or religion, not to consider the highest results attained. In this section I shall attempt to state these higher religious conceptions which occasionally appeared in Greece, both in their relation to later religious thought and in their relation to those general views of the Greek people out of which they developed.

In the first place it may be pointed out that the fundamental idea in Greek religion is that man's ability and activity are limited by a superior power akin to himself in its nature, and interested in his welfare. This controlling power in the world is not

fully represented by any particular god; rather it is a divine presence which is manifested now in one god, now in the community of the gods. No doubt this divine being was suggested by nature, for the physical universe was a limitation to man's activity, one complex power enveloping him. From Homer on, the gods in general (or some particular god) are represented as freely interfering to change the course of events in nature;[1] nor does this impress men as so very wonderful, since nature is part of that human environment in which the divine is manifested. And the divine had the same unity which was attributed to nature. At the same time this divine being was no doubt suggested also by the consideration of human experience and conduct. Again beginning with Homer we find that the poet's conception of society is frankly based on the idea of one governing power which sanctions right and law. The action of the Homeric poems rests on the belief that Troy must fall because Paris had abused the hospitality of Menelaus, and in the Odyssey that the insolence of Penelope's suitors is to bring destruction on their heads. The same belief in the moral government of the world is the keynote of much of the later literature.[2] Man's social environment is conceived as a (moral) divine government, just as his natural environment is the manifestation of a divine power about him and above him.

It appears then that the background of Greek philosophy of life is a divine power which makes for righteousness, a power not fully expressed in any of the gods of myth or the gods of worship, though it is not infrequently called by the name "Zeus."[3] From this point of view alone can be explained the general use of the words θεός and θεοί from Homer on. Affairs prosper when "god" or "the gods" favor[4]; "god" or "the gods" give men prowess in battle, beauty, or eloquence, and again it is "god" or

[1] The evidence for Homer is collected by Naegelsbach, *Homerische Theologie*, 49 f.

[2] Cp. *supra*, p. 256; Naegelsbach, *Homerische Theologie*, 317 f.; L. Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen*, 1. 47 f.; Tyler, *Theology of the Greek Poets*, 226 f.

[3] L. Schmidt, *ibid.* 1. 48–50.

[4] *Iliad*, 9. 49; 24. 430; cp. Sophocles, *Ajax*, 765.

Zeus to whom a particular event is referred.[1] The phrases τὸ θεῖον and θεία τύχη do not occur in Homer; in Aeschylus and Herodotus and later writers they are used as an alternative to the word θεός, to refer to much the same thing.[2] In a word, all through Greek literature the divine power back of human life and the physical universe is recognized, whether it is called Zeus or God or the Divine.

Perhaps it is not strange that this state of the case has given rise to the theory of Welcker (and others before him) that Greek religion started with monotheism. The exclusive recognition of one god at a time in worship has tended to strengthen the theory. At the same time it is quite clear that the belief in one divine power is by no means primitive in Greece; rather, the consciousness of it gradually developed along with the social consciousness (or sense of social unity) among the people. Philosophic thought pursued the same course in the direction of a theology that was monotheistic;[3] but for the public at large this divine power found its expression in and through the particular gods of worship.

From a modern point of view there is some truth in Schmidt's statement that the Greeks made no such antithesis as we make between the One and the Many in the divine world.[4] As it was the group of worshippers rather than the individual who sought communion with a god in worship, so it was easy to think of the divine now as manifested in a group of gods, now in a particular god. The unity of the divine became finally a necessity of human thought, but it was far more natural for the Greeks than it would be for us to conceive the divine unity as manifested in a series of gods. After these gods and their worship have been studied, it is fair to note how clearly the Greeks recognized that the "horizon of human consciousness" was one divine power.

[1] *Iliad*, 13. 730; 3. 66; *Odyssey*, 14. 444 and 183; 8. 176; 3. 228 and 231.

[2] Herodotus, 1. 32: 3. 108; 4. 8; Aeschylus, *Choeph*, 958; Sophocles, *Phil.* 1326; etc.

[3] Zeller, *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, 1. 1 f.

[4] L. Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen*, 1. 60.

**2. The Nature of a God in Greece.** — The fact that this "divine," the ruling power in the world, is centred or focussed in individual gods — personal gods recognized as such before the consciousness of any unity was clear — has led to those characteristics of Greek religion which are at first sight most striking. Because the personality of the gods was so like the personality of man, the gods could only be conceived as in the world, not apart from it. That same power over his environment which man might exercise was present to far larger degree in the gods; and while nothing in the world was outside the divine, the gods were necessarily limited by the very fact that they were many and were persons. As persons in the world they possessed that reality for man and that sympathy with him which were so distinctly felt in Greece.

It has already been pointed out that the Greek gods reflect every phase of human life. Not only the forms of worship, but also the conceptions of the gods themselves vary with prosperity and with adversity. With each considerable change in the community the nature of the gods is modified. And in particular whatever is human is for that reason represented in one or another of these superhuman members of human society. That the gods so constantly are acting with reference to man seems at first a childish conception; childish or not, this view is inevitable for gods which owe their existence to the social demands of their worshippers.

The most notable result of this process is the moral character assigned to the gods. Their position in society is that of rulers, rulers who should be wise, just, and merciful in dealing with their subjects, whatever license be granted to individual faults or vices. It appears that the idea of divine justice arose both in connection with the abstract conception of one divine power at work in the world, and also in connection with the separate personality of gods who were rulers. The thought of gods who watched over the welfare of their worshippers, on the other hand, belongs primarily with the conception of the gods as personal rulers. In the case of Zeus, father of gods and men, one may almost speak of divine

love for men[1]; perhaps, also, a patron deity of the state may be described as having a sort of affection for that state and its citizens. Divine wisdom and justice, mercy and beneficence, were not foreign to Greek thought; the other attribute which we assign to the Deity, the attribute of holiness, was not generally recognized, though later Greek thought did not hesitate to find its moral ideals impersonated in the gods. The essential fact about these gods, however, is that they were very near to man, gods that arose in response to human need and that met man's sense of need so completely.

The account of the forms of worship (Part I, Chap. ii) has, I believe, confirmed the statement in the introduction (p. 32 f.) that Greek worship is primarily a social matter, the effort of the worshipper to establish social relations with his god. The homage paid to divine rulers may be in the form of tribute, of processions and pageants, of banquets shared by gods and worshippers; whatever its form it is essentially homage, intended to express the grateful submission of the subject to his ruler, and more especially the desire of the subject for such blessings as come from a sympathetic and beneficent ruler. The general object of worship was to secure this social connection between the community of worshippers and their patron god.

The above statement leaves out rites of riddance or aversion, mystic rites, and perhaps rites to pacify angry deities. This last type of worship is not inconsistent with the idea of kindly rulers, for any ruler may be stirred to anger by his subjects and some special effort may be necessary to restore his spirit of friendliness. It has further been pointed out that some gods, notably agricultural deities, are by nature fickle, so that special rites are practised from time to time to remove possible causes of anger. The purpose of these rites is not essentially different from that of other rites to cultivate the social connection of god and worshipper.

Inasmuch as the gods are essentially good, it is necessary to

[1] Schoemann, *Griech. Alt.* 2. 148 f.

seek elsewhere the causes of mischief and evil, except when they can be interpreted as due to just anger of the gods. Such spirits of evil occupy a remarkably small place in Greek religion, but their presence is attested by rites of aversion. The rather sharp line between these rites and worship proper reduces this phase of belief almost to the level of pure superstition. Men sought social relations with the greater gods as the true source of blessing and of escape from evil; in disaster they sought to mollify the anger of the gods and to remove the causes of that anger; that they also tried to drive away spirits of evil means that they had not escaped entirely from this more primitive conception of life.

The conception of the gods as personal rulers, far-reaching as it is, does not cover the whole matter, for an undercurrent of mysticism here and there comes to the surface with a strikingly different account of them. Nor is religious worship entirely confined to rites that can be explained as social. The sharp limits of personality which define a god may be broken down; some divine influence may be felt as existing in the blood of a sacrificial victim or in the juice of the grape; man himself may be possessed by the divine presence, till he loses himself in the larger nature of the god. This merging of god and nature or of god and man belongs to the sphere of mysticism.

The mystic element has already been pointed out in the study of oracles and divination. Knowledge of the future may be gained through signs and dreams; it may also be gained through seers who have such intimate connection with the god that they speak for the god, not for themselves — seers like the Pythian priestess or the Sibyl. Imitative worship, such as the drama of the slaying of the Python at Delphi, probably had some mystic meaning originally, however it was understood later. The ecstatic worship of Dionysus was frankly accepted as irrational and mystical. The purpose of music and dance and wild rites in the forest was to create in actual human experience the sense of union with the divine. Religion thus became the means of breaking the bonds which held the soul of man apart from God, in order that it might

find its true home in the divine being. Such a belief is in sharp contrast to the ordinary Greek view of life. It was never widespread or controlling; that it existed at all along with the preeminently rational account of human life in relation to the world and to the gods is noteworthy proof of the Greek breadth of view in religious matters.

**3. Sin and the Remedy for Sin.** — Much of Christian theology has centred about the two related conceptions of sin and its remedy; Semitic religion, also, laid stress on rites of expiation and atonement; while these ideas and the rites associated with them necessarily formed a part of Greek religion, they remained ordinarily in the background. The clearness of moral vision which could not overlook punishment as the result of trangression is in part responsible for this result in Greece. Perhaps the almost rationalistic interpretation of the gods as like human rulers checked the moral demand for gods that were pure and holy, together with the requirement that man should aim at a similar ideal. From the Greek point of view the facts are distinct enough: trangression of moral law calls for punishment by divine rulers, and consequently it may be regarded as "sin"; what is most evidently sin against the gods is that neglect or presumption which develops out of undue self-reliance; finally the thought of sin as pollution which must be purified in order to restore a right relation between god and worshipper is common in ritual. These three points of view are not clearly distinguished, nor is the religious conception of sin (and its remedy) ever sharply defined.

The Greek "theodicy" is absolutely simple. Sin is known by the suffering and misfortune which follows in its train. A man may suffer for his own sins; quite as often the community suffers because some member of it has provoked the anger of the gods, or the family suffers because it is under the curse of an ancestral sin. Of this last point the family of Oedipus or of Atreus may serve as a mythical type. The army of the Greeks, as a community, suffers from a plague when Agamemnon has reviled the priest Chryses, and Troy at length must fall because Paris has

violated the hospitality of Menelaus.[1] The presumption of an individual like Creon or Pentheus brings swift punishment.[2] In these matters myth is but the prototype for the Greek interpretation of daily experience.

The causes of sin are not infrequently mentioned in Greek literature.[3] Humanity is frail and ever liable to err.[4] Though error and sin, like all else in human life, is not infrequently referred to the gods,[5] the real cause of sin is found in the nature of man. Até, the blind folly which leads man on from sin to sin and to ultimate disaster, is one of the most striking moral conceptions in the Homeric poems.[6] Although this word shifts its meaning later, the conception that sin begets sin, that sin is the cause of intellectual blindness and perversion of the will which end in disaster, is still fundamental in Greek thought.[7] Laius disregarded Apollo's warning not to marry; his son Oedipus, with all his high and pure ideals, in anger killed a man who proved to be his father, and unwittingly married his mother; to the sons and daughters of this marriage came sin and suffering till the race was extinct. Such was one typical example of sin as the cause of sin.

The original sin of Laius was the disregard of Apollo, caused by his desire for marriage. Not only passion, but also other impulses of human nature, like envy and the love of gain, lead men astray.[8] The Greeks summed up the whole matter in the conception of ὕβρις, or presumption, which may be stated as follows: Prosperity leads to an undue self-confidence which forgets moderation or even divine warning in carrying out its own plans.[9] Blind

[1] Herodotus, 2. 120. [2] *Odyssey*, 4. 502; Sophocles, *Ant. passim.*

[3] Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen*, 1. 230.

[4] Sophocles, *Ant.* 1023; Thucydides, 3. 45. 3; Pindar, *Olym.* 7. 24–25.

[5] *Iliad*, 4. 86 f.; *Odyssey*, 4. 261; Plato, *Politia*, 2, p. 380 A, and quotation from Aeschylus.

[6] *Iliad*, 19. 91 f.; *Odyssey*, 1. 32. [7] Cp. Sophocles, *Ant.* 1242.

[8] Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen*, 1. 255; cp. Plato, *Politia*, 4, p. 439 A, f.; Pindar, *Pyth.* 3. 54.

[9] *E.g. Odyssey*, 16. 86, *et passim;* Aeschylus, *Agam.* 750 f.; Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 872 f., Pindar, *Olym.* 13. 10 f.; *Isthm.* 4. 13–15; cp. *Deuteronomy* 6. 10 f.

folly (Até) is the result of presumption; sin leads to sin because it makes man presumptuous; any wrong-doing is really sin against the gods because it means a presumptuous disregard of divine law.

The remedy for sin, in so far as any remedy is possible, depends on the nature of sin. When it is transgression of law, law which is divinely appointed,[1] nothing can be done to avert the inevitable penalty. That Aegisthus can atone for his sin in marrying Clytaemnestra by means of sacrifice and votive offerings, or that the followers of Odysseus can allay Helios's anger by similar means when they have disregarded the warning not to slay his cattle, are suggestions condemned by Homer as clearly as by Plato.[2] Ultimate escape is hardly won by Orestes, even though it was Apollo himself who bade him slay the guilty Clytaemnestra.[3] All that can be done by way of remedy is concerned, not with avoidance of the direct penalty for transgression, but with the spirit of presumption which is so intimately associated with the act of wrong-doing.

Again, in so far as sin is the expression of a wrong spirit on the part of the sinner, it may be remedied (*a*) by making amends, if possible, and (*b*) by seeking to gain anew the favor of the gods in worship. The religious side of the matter is the disregard of the gods, which the Greeks also traced to presumption (ὕβρις) and which of course provoked the anger of the gods; the remedy, therefore, consists in giving evidence of a desire to honor the rule of the gods and in a direct effort to allay their anger. In the language of Herodotus and Sophocles the sin is "healed."[4]

The Homeric poems give examples of sins that can be "healed," and of sins too grave for healing: the affront of Ajax to Poseidon and that of the Greek hosts to Athena are beyond cure; the anger of gods for failure to make sacrifice may be appeased; even Agamemnon's harsh treatment of Apollo's priest may be set right

[1] Sophocles, *Ant.* 604 f.; *Oed. Tyr.* 865 f.; "The doer suffers," Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 306; Xenophon, *Mem.* 4. 4. 19.

[2] *Odyssey*, 3. 273 f.; 12. 343 f.; Plato, *Politia*, 2, p. 364 B, f.

[3] Aeschylus, *Oresteia*.

[4] Herodotus, 1. 167; Sophocles, *Ant.* 1027; cp. Pindar, *Olym.* 7. 43.

by making amends and by sacrifice.[1] It was an insult to Apollo when Croesus tested the truthfulness of the Delphic oracle, but the gifts of Croesus were accepted by the god as an atonement.[2] More than once a plague was regarded as evidence of divine anger at neglected worship, anger which was allayed by reviving the worship.[3] It has been noted that such an affront to the gods as the mutilation of the hermae at Athens, although it was an act of individuals, brought the anger of the gods on the state; accordingly it was the function of the state to punish the individuals concerned and to seek to propitiate the gods. Any form of worship might serve this purpose in that it was proof of man's desire to restore normal relations with the gods.

A slightly different side of the matter appears especially in the tragedians, namely, the doctrine that suffering itself may sometimes serve as a sort of expiation for sin. Anything like self-imposed penance is absolutely foreign to Greek religion. But that suffering may teach a better spirit,[4] and that the natural punishment may "loose" the power of sin, are ideas familiar to Greek thought. As the death of a murderer "looses" the influence of his deed for evil,[5] so suffering may in the end overcome the effect of a lesser crime. Perhaps the *Oedipus* of Sophocles may be regarded as an illustration of this form of expiation — in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* a king self-willed, quick to anger, and relying on his own powers; in the *Oedipus Coloneus*, after years of suffering for his unwitting sin, a man chastened and brought into harmony with the will of the gods.

From a third point of view sin is a form of pollution, and its remedy is found in rites of purification. Pollution and purification do not necessarily have anything to do with sin;[6] probably the conception of a dangerous substance which must be purged

1 *Odyssey*, 4. 503; 3. 143 f.; 4. 472; *Iliad*, 9. 533 f.; 1. 94 f.; cp. 9. 497 f.
2 Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 7. 2. 19.
3 Pausanias, 8. 42. 5 f.
4 πάθει μάθος, Aeschylus, *Agam.* 177; cp. Herodotus, 1. 207; Plato, *Symp.* 222 B.
5 Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 100; Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 803 f.
6 Cp. *supra*, p. 110 f.

away belongs originally to quite a different range of ideas; but moral evil also comes to be regarded as pollution, and purification is thought to give relief from an evil which separates god and worshipper. In the first book of the *Iliad* (1. 313 f.) the plague, which manifested the divine anger at Agamemnon's sin, made purification necessary; similarly, the house of Odysseus was purified after the crime and punishment of the suitors.[1] Any death caused an impurity, but murder caused an impurity and a consequent anger which were not easily removed.[2] When the followers of Cylon were slain in violation of the rights of sanctuary, those who committed the outrage were banished, and then elaborate rites of purification were necessary before the city could expect again the favor of its gods.[3] Certain cults laid more emphasis than others on the need of purification. There is some evidence that the ritual purity demanded, *e.g.* in the Eleusinian mysteries, was at times carried over into the ethical field[4]; in other words that in these rites men sought relief from the feeling of guilt for sin. In any case it is clear (*a*) that pollution was not primarily a moral matter that could be called sin, but (*b*) that at least some kinds of sin came to be regarded as a pollution demanding rites of purification.

In general the Greek conception of sin differs radically from the Christian conception, because Greek religion laid comparatively little stress on holiness and on the idea of divine love. Wrongdoing is sin against the divine power which governs the world righteously; it is not a rejection of the loving care of the gods, nor a lapse from that ideal of life which the gods exemplify. The three points of view considered are more marked, one at one time, one at another. It is noticeable that, while each conception is worked out logically, the three are not brought together with any definiteness or unity.

[1] *Odyssey*, 22. 481, 494. [2] Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 96, 236, 1519.

[3] Thucydides, 1. 126; Herodotus, 6. 91.

[4] *E.g.* Tertullian, *De praescript.* 40; Diodorus Siculus, 5. 49. 6; cp. schol. on Aristophanes, *Pax*, 278; Plato, *Politia*, 2, p. 364 E.

**4. The Conception of the Religious Life.** — In Christianity the ideals of the religious life and the conception of its nature have assumed various forms during nineteen centuries. The faith in a controlling divine presence has not failed, nor has the sense of divine love ever been lacking; on the other hand the goal to be attained, "salvation" in Christian terminology, has received interpretations as various as the means by which this goal has been sought. At one time salvation has been interpreted as the holiness to be acquired through escape from sin; the means have been penance and avoidance of contact with the world; the motive has often seemed to be selfish, though the effort to become good had little meaning except as this goodness was thought to be pleasing to God. At other times the motive has seemed to be a social one in that religious men have aimed to do good rather than to be good; the means has been the service of others in the community; "salvation" has been recognized in the freedom from selfish purpose or desire thus attained. Between these two poles has oscillated the conception of the religious life.

Probably the ancient Greek would have understood the impulse to do good as little as the impulse to be good, yet we find in Greece the germs of both points of view. The general ideal of social service appears in a very concrete form as the demand that the citizen perform his part in the state and the community, while the requirements of morality, as has been pointed out above,[1] were never wholly divorced from religion. Negatively in Greece the religious life meant to avoid impiety (ἀσέβεια). Acts of impiety were of course punished by the state through the special court where such cases were tried. Still the requirement was purely external, for public worship was never compulsory and a man was never questioned as to his belief. For the individual to avoid impiety meant simply to avoid acting in defiance of the practices of established religion.

The external mark of piety was regularity and punctiliousness in the performance of religious rites. In the Homeric poems

[1] P. 307.

every meal was marked by sacrifice and libation; in later days at Athens the same principle probably obtained, though there was room for very great difference between what custom required and what a pious man might do if he chose. In the spirit of piety portrayed, the account of Cephalus in Plato corresponds closely to that of Peleus in the *Iliad*.[1] As for the public festivals, the religious man doubtless felt it his duty to join the community in worship, while many must have come from other than religious motives. Moreover, there were extra religious rites outside the state worship which appealed to a considerable number. It was no more fair then than it is now to define the pious man as one who was scrupulous about sacrificing regularly to the gods,[2] but then as now it was the outward mark of piety.

Plato makes Euthyphro[3] give as one definition of piety that it is "doing what pleases the gods," a definition that proves unsatisfactory because what pleases the gods has in turn to be defined as piety. In fact experience was the test which led the Greeks to think that religious observances pleased the gods and therefore were the true expression of piety. The conception of piety which is involved in the requirement to join the community in worship is perhaps broader than appears at first sight. The state worship was maintained on the ground that the gods cared for the honor and success of the state; whatever contributed to this end would therefore be gratifying to the gods and an element in piety. In other words all that society demanded of a man, all that was right and good in life, would receive indirectly the sanction of religion because the welfare of the state was an object of concern to the gods.

Although one finds in Greece no conscious demand that the pious man be like the gods, nevertheless as the gods were developed into harmony with the higher ideals of human life, these ideals at length were reënforced by the influence of the gods. We

[1] Plato, *Politia*, 1, p. 328 C; *Iliad*, 11. 773 f.
[2] Plato, *Euthyphro*, 14 B; cp. Xenophon, *Mem.* 4. 6. 2 f.
[3] *Euthyphro*, 7 A.

have seen that art and literature did much to shape the thought of the gods in this direction; the very recognition that in a painting or a tragedy the gods did represent true human ideals could but lead, even though unconsciously, to an effort to become like the gods. To Plato this point was very clear. The demand that in his ideal state the gods be pictured as true, unchanging, not subject to weak emotion, etc., was based on the fact that the religious man could not avoid the effort to be like the gods. For the same reason the statue of Apollo, type of perfect young manhood, belonged in the palaestra, the statue of Hephaestus in the workshop, the statue of Hermes in the market-place. So Pindar describes the peaceful serenity of Apollo, which those who worship Apollo may acquire.[1] The poetic picture of the gods, as Plato points out, is so non-religious that its influence in this direction was quite different from that of art.

The sense of need which underlies the religious life had in Greece less to do with freedom from evil than with positive benefits that were desired. Homer's phrase "all men need the gods"[2] seems to mean that men need those blessings which come from beneficent divine rulers. Other nations might be oppressed with the evils of life; religion for them might be a grievous task to secure freedom from this burden; kindly gods and a joyous worship were the birthright of the Greeks. To sin against these gods brought terrible penalties indeed; on the other hand sin and evil were not ever present facts, nor was self-imposed penance the method of securing relief when they were present. There were rites to deal with circumstances where special help was needed — help in sickness, knowledge of the future, help in time of drought or mildew for the crops. At the same time the point of view was that the gods were by nature ready to bless; not gods who yielded grudgingly to the pressure of powerful rites such as Rome used in time of great trouble. Not until the Hellenistic age did religion become the effort to obtain salvation from evil.

The sense of human dependence on the gods was in no degree

[1] Pindar, *Pyth.* 5. [2] *Odyssey*, 3. 48.

weakened because sin and evil did not continually drive men to seek divine help. This dependence appears first in the form of obedience — Achilles obeys the gods, eager as he is to maintain his honor against Agamemnon, or to gratify his vengeance by keeping Hector's body from his parents; and the spirit of Achilles prevailed among the later Greeks.[1] To be sure the motive was frankly fear of divine punishment to him who disobeyed.[2] Yet fear of the gods often took the form of reverence when the justice of the divine rule was so clearly recognized.[3]

Again the sense of dependence appeared as trustful confidence in the gods. When Agamemnon or Menelaus or Achilles prayed to the gods,[4] it was with confidence in their favor and blessing, for the Greeks had come to Troy with divine favor (σὺν θεῷ). The Greek general waited for favorable omens that his army might obtain this confidence. Whoever was convinced that his cause was right, believed that the power of the gods was with him, for no one doubted the justice of the gods.[5] In fact this attitude of trustful confidence was the only natural outcome of the conception that the gods were bound up with the state in one social group. That it must have often met with disappointment was easily explained on the ground that men had in some way failed to do their part.

And when evil did come, the sense of dependence on the gods appeared as resignation. Though it is the will of Zeus that many Greeks perish, they still go to the sacrificial meal and prepare for the battle.[6] The counsels of the gods were often inexplicable; none the less what the gods sent must be accepted, for man had no choice in the matter. Resignation was the easier because good was to be expected after evil. Pessimistic as the Greek poets often are, little as they often think of the value of

[1] *Iliad*, 1. 216; 24. 139; Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 881; Xenophon, *Mem.* 4. 3. 17.

[2] *Iliad*, 16. 388; *Odyssey*, 14. 82; Thucydides, 2. 53, 4.

[3] Xenophon, *Anab.* 2. 3. 22; *Mem.* 1. 4. 19; Antiphon, *Tetral.* 2. 2. 12; Aeschines, 1. 50; Isocrates, 5. 116 f.

[4] *Iliad*, 2. 412; 17. 561; 16. 233; 9. 49.

[5] Sophocles, *Elec.* 173 f.

[6] *Iliad*, 19. 274.

human life, the faith in gods who care for the community and bless their righteous followers does not fail them.

Finally the sense of dependence on the gods appears as man's desire for companionship with them. The conception of a father's ove for his children does not find very frequent mention in literature, nor does it come out clearly in the relation of the gods to men. It is potentially present but undeveloped even in the case of Zeus. On the other hand the social bond uniting the god with his worshippers lies at the very root of the Greek religious instinct. Again and again we have had occasion to point out that worship and belief grew naturally out of this conception. If the word "companionship" suggests too much the relation of equals, yet it is hard to find a better name for a social connection so enduring, so intimate, so clearly conceived in terms of human personality.

When human ideals, and not simply the facts and forces of man's environment, found expression in the gods, it is not difficult to trace the results of this conception of the religious life. It was with the thought of Athena, protecting goddess of the city, that the general went into battle; Artemis, the goddess of good counsel (Boulaia), had her shrine where the Athenian assembly met; Athena Ergane guided the woman in her weaving; Hermes was with the trader in the market, Poseidon with the sailor in his voyage, Artemis of the wilds (Agrotera) with the hunter in his pursuit of game. The Greeks reverenced their gods, feared their anger, trusted their protection; but it was this sense of divine companionship in every task of daily life which made religion a vital matter.

It is easy to imagine that in the middle of the fifth century B.C. religion was hardly more than a superstition for many of the Athenians; we know too that this superstition found its counterpart in a rationalism almost as unintelligent; yet we can hardly believe that for the audiences of Sophocles religion was an outworn garment or the religious life a mere name.

# APPENDIX I

## THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEK GOD—ARTEMIS

1. In the Introduction the difference between the gods in worship and the picture of the gods in myth was discussed, and in Part II the stages in the development of Greek religion were briefly treated. Perhaps both phases of the subject may be made clearer, if one concrete example is considered more in detail, even at the risk of introducing more or less that is hypothetical in the effort to connect the historical data. For this purpose I have chosen the goddess Artemis as a striking and interesting example. Both in myth and in worship the facts about the goddess are as definite as they are abundant. And while much remains to be desired in explaining the facts, the general course of development is fairly well established.

The Artemis of myth is a definite personality in story and in art from the Homeric poems on. The ideal of young womanhood in all its purity and vigor, the leader of the nymphs in the chase as well as in the dance, the sister of Apollo god of light, and herself sometimes goddess of the moon as Apollo is god of the sun—such is the goddess of myth. Particular myths, the stories of Callisto and Arethusa and Actaeon and Hippolytus, have to do with a goddess of hunting who stands for virginal purity. The connection with Apollo (even the story of her birth on the island of Delos) seems to be secondary to the idea of the chaste huntress. The Artemis of Versailles in the Louvre is the plastic representation of this idea, an idea that has left its mark on all our European literature. But if we turn to worship, the goddess is neither so definite a person nor quite the same person. Granted that prac-

tice is ordinarily older than story, the problem is first to coördinate the accounts of the worship of Artemis and then to trace, so far as is possible, the influences that shaped the story and later belief.

2. We may begin with the cults of Artemis in the vicinity of Athens. At Agrae, south from the Acropolis, was the shrine of Artemis Agrotera, that goddess of the hunt to whom before the battle of Marathon the Athenian general vowed a sacrifice of goats. On the Acropolis itself was a branch of the worship of Artemis Brauronia, a goddess of wild nature-life who had some mystic connection with the bear. This connection with wild animals again appears in the worship of Artemis Mounychia at the seaport of Athens, and in other cults on the east coast of Attica (for example, that of Artemis Amarysia). The Brauronian Artemis received the names Chitone and Lysizonos, for young women dedicated to her garments and girdles before marriage. Again, Artemis was identified in worship with Hecate, the goddess of uncanny rites performed at night; Artemis Hecate presided over the entrance to the Athenian acropolis. Near the market place of Athens was a shrine of Artemis Orthia, perhaps a goddess of vegetation; while in the market place Artemis was worshipped as Boulaia, goddess of political wisdom, and as Eukleia, goddess of fair fame; another shrine of the goddess of political wisdom, Artemis Aristoboule, was situated in the deme of Melite to the southwest of the Acropolis. In the Academy just out of the city was a shrine of Artemis with statues of Ariste and Kalliste ("Best" and "Fairest"), apparently forms of the goddess. The name of Artemis was also applied to some foreign goddesses whose worship was introduced into Athens, to the goddess of Pherae in Thessaly, whose proper name seems to have been Brimo (called Artemis Pheraea), and to the Thracian Bendis (Artemis Bendis). In a word, we know something of ten or fifteen separate centres of Artemis worship in and about Athens. The many-sided nature of the goddess is, from the point of view of worship, quite as evident as any underlying unity.

3. If this survey is extended over the Greek world, the result is much the same, except that the wider view makes it possible to group the cults of the goddess under certain general headings. By far the most widespread phase of Artemis worship connects her with hunting and wild animals. At Athens one of the months was named Elaphebolion ("Stag-hunt"); and there are some references to a festival (Elaphebolia) at which cakes in the form of a stag were offered to Artemis, though it does not appear that this worship was recognized by the state. Among some Dorian peoples the same month was known as Artamisios (Artemisios), while in Phocis it was called Laphrios from the widespread worship of Artemis Laphria. The month-name is an indication that this is an early type of Artemis, and a goddess of hunting goes with a relatively early type of social life. The goddess herself receives some names that refer to hunting, such as Elaphia, Kynagia, Toxia. Artemis Diktynna, worshipped in Crete and Sparta and Phocis, was interpreted by the Athenians as the goddess of the hunting net. Artemis Kolainis in Euboea was connected in story with the hunter Amarynthus; and Atalante, the huntress of Mt. Parthenopaeus, seems to have been a form of Artemis. Other great hunters, Saron, Hippolytus, Anticleia, Scamandrius, looked to Artemis as their patron. When Xenophon brought the worship of Artemis from Ephesus to Scillus, he instituted the worship of a hunting goddess. Artemis Tauropolos ("Tender of bulls") can hardly be dissociated from the bull fights and bull hunts of early Greece, and perhaps the torches which she carried had primary reference to the use of torches in hunting at night. In a word, the normal Greek conception of Artemis as a huntress seems to be based on the primitive worship of a goddess of hunting.

Closely associated with the goddess of hunting is the "Queen of wild beasts." Reliefs and paintings of early date represent her holding up an animal in each hand (the so-called Persian Artemis). In different localities the stag, the bear, the wild boar, the wild goat, the wolf, the quail (Ortygia), are connected with her worship. As Callisto in story was changed into a bear for unchastity, so

Taygete was changed into a stag; each is the mother of a people, and each is apparently a form of the goddess herself. Artemis Laphria, worshipped by hunters, was essentially a goddess of wild animal life who received wild animals in sacrifice. Artemis Lyaia was connected with the stag; the nymph Cyrene was an Artemis-like goddess associated with the lion, like the Artemis of Syracuse; on the island of Aegina Aphaia was a goddess of wild animals who became Artemis Aphaia. For us the goddess of hunters is perhaps hardly consistent with the goddess who protects wild animals and cares for their young;[1] the Greeks felt no such inconsistency. This goddess of wild animals was most at home in Aetolia, whence the worship of Laphria was carried to Patrae. In Asia Minor also a "Mother of Life" not dissimilar was very widely worshipped and often identified with Artemis by the Greeks.

4. A second widespread series of cults recognized Artemis as a goddess of the moisture which fertilizes vegetation, and consequently as the goddess of fertility not only in plants but also in animals and men. This is the goddess of springtime, worshipped with dances (often obscene) to promote fertility, who held so important a place in the religion of the Peloponnese. In Laconia the branch of olive hung before the door gave its name to Artemis Korythalia, a goddess of plant life as of child life. The curious worship of Artemis Lygodesma, in which the Spartan youths were lashed to the limit of their endurance, and in which a sickle or pruning knife was the prize for victory in the games, belongs under this heading. This form of Artemis was associated with trees, the walnut, the cedar, the laurel, and the cypress. All these cults included dances, probably intended to increase the crops and the productiveness of flocks. Artemis Apanchomene, the goddess "who was hung," was apparently connected with a sacred tree, from which sacrifices for fertility were suspended. Artemis Lyaia of Syracuse received sacks of all fruits and skins of wine; from choral songs in her honor the bucolic hymns are said to have developed.

[1] Xenophon, *Cyneget.* 5. 14; Aeschylus, *Agam.* 135 f.; and cp. Alexandra, Pausanias, 3. 19. 6, Preller-Robert, *Griech. Myth.* 307, A. 2.

Especially in the Peloponnese Artemis was associated with swamps and springs and rivers; such forms of the goddess were Limnatis, worshipped in Patrae and in Laconia with orgiastic dance, Issoria, Thermaia, Alpheiaia, perhaps Eurynome and Stymphalia. Arethusa, also, is a nymph who seems once to have been a form of the goddess herself.

In the case of Artemis Korythalia the festival in her honor was called Tithenidia ("Nurse festival"), for a part was played by small boys with their nurses living in harvest huts. The blows given to ephebi in the worship of Artemis Lygodesma may be interpreted as a means of driving away evil, or as blows from a "rod of life." And quite generally the dances of Artemis were anything but dances of chaste nymphs in their origin; on the contrary, they were supposed directly to stimulate the forces making for fertility in nature. From such a goddess there might easily have arisen a goddess of the grain, had not Demeter won this position among the later Greeks; indeed, it is more than possible that goddesses of this type, such as the Despoina of Arcadia, were identified with the later Demeter quite as often as with the later Artemis.

It seems not unnatural that the goddess of nascent life should also appear as the goddess of human childbirth, and that the protector of young animals should also protect young children. In this function Artemis appears as Locheia and Lysizonos; Eileithyia is now a form of the goddess, now an independent being; girls were "initiated" in the service of Artemis Brauronia and dedicated tokens of their childhood to her before marriage; to Artemis Chitone were dedicated garments after childbirth; Iphigeneia and Kalligeneia are names referring to this function of the goddess. Clearly the protection of mothers and children is primary, the virgin character of the goddess secondary, in the nature of Artemis.

Of the connection of Artemis with Apollo and Hecate and the moon, as of her place in city life, we shall speak later, the two general types already described seem to be the basis out of which the later goddess developed. This division, however, does not necessarily mean that the cults already mentioned are primitive,

but only of a primitive type; nor does it mean that the cults discussed later are inevitably late in origin, but rather that they exhibit later conceptions which doubtless were often superimposed on an early worship.

5. The interesting fact as to the cults discussed above is that they all have points of connection, but no two of them are quite alike. Clearly we might assume one goddess whose nature and worship had become different in different localities, or we might assume different goddesses who were gradually merged into the one Artemis of belief and myth while certain peculiarities were retained at local shrines. To the first assumption there are serious objections. What is the nature of the original one goddess? Surely not the moon, as the Stoics assumed, or the night, as Claus suggested; we have no evidence of a connection with the moon until well on in the fifth century. Again, this theory leaves out of account the late identifications of Artemis with Hecate, and Bendis, and the Mother goddess of Asia Minor. Finally, it starts with the unified conception of the goddess in literature and art, and treats the older and more vital conceptions of worship as wholly secondary.

Nor is it wholly satisfactory to start with the second assumption, namely, that different, disconnected goddesses were merged into one because a certain likeness between them was detected.[1] The forces at work in the late identifications such as that of Artemis with Brimo, could hardly have existed in the same form in early days. With Curtius [2] and Wernicke [3] we may begin by setting aside these fairly late examples and consider by itself the question of cults that may be regarded as distinctly early.

Wernicke (l. c.), in writing the history of Artemis, starts with a "great female divinity of nature widely worshipped in Greece from early days," and from this one goddess he explains most of the later forms of Artemis by a process of differentiation from the general to the specific. Perhaps it is simply a difference of

[1] Cp. Cicero, *De nat. deor.* 3. 23/58; Welcker, *Griech. Götterlehre*, 1, 560 f.
[2] "Studien zur Geschichte der Artemis," *Ges. Abhand.* 2. 1 f.
[3] In Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopaedie*, 2. 1339 f.

phraseology, though the difference seems to me to lie deeper, to say that the starting-point of Artemis is to be found in a type rather than in any real unity of person. The type is fairly definite: a goddess of the life principle in nature, more closely connected with vegetation in the Peloponnese and with animals in Boeotia and Aetolia, but never quite limited to either sphere. At the same time the type is fairly broad, and no one would deny a tendency to define it gradually (and differently) at each centre of worship. This tendency to definition has perhaps been overemphasized by such scholars as Wernicke, to the neglect of a widespread tendency in all phases of social development, the tendency toward larger and more complex unities.

This last tendency or process is seen in the development of the state. Smaller villages unite in the city, and the city absorbs other communities till it becomes a city-state like Athens or Sparta, and on this basis develops the Athenian confederacy or the Spartan hegemony. It is seen in commerce, first in the increasing trade of one city, Chalcis or Aegina or Athens, later in the increasing commercial unity of the Mediterranean world. It is seen in ethical ideals and social institutions, till in the fifth century the two different standards of Athens and Sparta are dominant all through the Greek world. It is seen in language, where one finds a great variety of dialects to be classified under certain types, then a few types tending to absorb lesser varieties, and at length a general κοινή. This same tendency or process I assume to have been at work in religion, a process of synthesis, of "condensation" (see *supra*, p. 212), of organization. And for a particular goddess like Artemis, it means that in popular belief (as well as in myth) goddesses of the same type tended to merge in one personality. A double name like Artemis Laphria bears the stamp of this process in that the first part stands for the original type and the acquired unity, the second part or epithet for the original (and acquired) differences as seen in worship.

More concretely in the case of Artemis this process might be stated as follows: Very many of the small groups or communities

of Greek race which made their way down into the land which was to become Greece, and whose independence was guaranteed for long periods by the character of the region to which they came, worshipped each some goddess of wild nature-life. As Queen of the Wild her home would be in moist dells where vegetation flourished and animals found their favorite haunts. Hunters worshipped her that she might favor them in the pursuit of game; with the return of vegetable life after the drought of summer or the cold of winter, men sought to help the process by "sympathetic worship"; in some places women sought the blessing of this divine mother that they might bear strong children. From one point of view these goddesses were as separate as the communities which worshipped them. Even when one name came to be used for the same idea in different communities, this name did not mean quite the same in any two. These forms of the goddess were all different, yet the conditions which gave rise to the worship were so similar that the type was the same. This statement is hypothesis, but it is difficult to imagine any other hypothesis if we recognize (1) the multiplicity and variety of the later cults of Artemis, and (2) the fact that social development is from many small simple units to a few larger and more complex units.

Only one other possibility need be considered, viz. that the personality of the goddess, like her name, spread from some one centre. We can hardly question that the differences of worship, quite as much as the likenesses, at each cult-centre are original. On this basis it becomes relatively unimportant whether we believe that the goddess Artemis absorbed the goddesses of these different worships, or that the name Artemis prevailed over other names as these goddesses were fused into one homogeneous being. I cannot but feel that the first alternative lays undue stress on the connection between the name and the complex personality of the goddess, real as this is, and that the second alternative is truer to the facts of religious history in Greece. The early history of Artemis, then, may be described as a synthesis of goddesses similar but not identical in nature. That it was gradual, perhaps lagging

behind the development of a social unity along other lines, that it was ordinarily unconscious and never the result of state decrees or priestly craft, that the unity of the goddess came to be clearly felt even before myth and poetry did much to make her personality more real, we can hardly doubt. But with the general acceptance of the name Artemis, one stage in the process was finally completed and the embellishment of myth then served to make the name and the person of the goddess familiar throughout Greece.[1]

6. It remains to examine the different lines of influence which were at work in forming the later personality of the goddess. And first are the influences which may be described as social. The process just outlined makes the creation of one Artemis dependent on the forces which in general make for social and intellectual unification; we may therefore expect that particular social changes, with their new activities and new needs, would leave their mark on the goddess. We have seen that the early Artemis was intimately associated with a period when hunting was a real method of livelihood. As the early communities came to depend more on flocks and herds, less on game, for food, it would not be unnatural that the protector of wild animals should be worshipped as protector of the flocks. This conception appears in Artemis Knakalesia, Hemerasia (the "Tamer"), Polyboia, and perhaps in Artemis Tauropolos, as well as in the name of the Artemis-nymph Polymele. Ordinarily the fact that Apollo was already recognized as the god of flocks prevented such a change in the conception of Artemis. Again, the increased development of agriculture might

[1] Various "heroines" and nymphs in the train of Artemis may be regarded as a by-product of this process, either because an old goddess-name was too strongly rooted to permit its disappearance in an epithet of Artemis, or because it had already found a place for itself in story. Iphigenia was such an Artemis "heroine," worshipped at Megara in her own name (Pausanius, 1. 43. 3) and prominent in myth, while at Hermione there was a worship of Artemis Iphigenia. Atalante was apparently a form of Artemis, who later became a heroine of myth. And the nymphs Callisto, Taygete, Ortygia, Arethusa, Diktynna, have already been mentioned as forms of the goddess herself.

easily have transformed Artemis the goddess of fertility into a goddess of the grain, had not Demeter and Persephone been the first to receive this function. In the Peloponnesus, however, we find the old rites in honor of the goddess of fertility still widely celebrated in later times in order that crops may be prospered; in other words, the worship is adapted in many places to the needs of an agricultural people. With the development of city life the earlier phases of Artemis worship (connected with hunting and with vegetable life) might naturally fall into disuse, while her function as protector of women in childbirth and of young children would remain. In spite of influences tending to emphasize the virgin goddess, the phase of her nature just mentioned found recognition in Attica, Boeotia, and elsewhere.

The tendency in Greece to regard a community as under the protection of some one god, the god of the city, is seen even in the case of Artemis. At Patrae, Artemis Triklaria seems to have been the divinity in whose name and worship different communities combined to establish the city. In Euboea, the pan-Ionic league met at the temple of Artemis Amarysia under the sanctioning protection of the goddess. The goddess of good counsel, Artemis Boulaia, or Boulephoros, had some political significance; the same may probably be said of Artemis Peitho, the goddess of (rhetorical?) persuasion at Argos. In various cities Artemis worship was carried on at the market place (Aegium, Athens, Sicyon, Sparta, Troezen), and perhaps the name Artemis Agoraia at Olympia refers to a connection with trade. It involved no great change to transform the hunting goddess into a war goddess. The epithets Aristoboule, Eukleia, and Soteira are doubtless to be explained by the counsel, fair fame, and safety which Artemis granted in war. It is not unnatural, then, that goats were offered to Artemis Agrotera after Marathon, or that the victory at Salamis was celebrated in connection with the festival of Artemis Mounichia. The relation of Artemis to the early "Mother of Life" in Asia Minor, also, gave her name and character to the city goddess in some important places.

7. Another important line of influence in the history of Artemis was religious in its nature, in that other forms of worship and belief tended to modify the idea of Artemis in belief and in worship. I refer particularly to the relation with Apollo which was fixed before the time of the Homeric poems, and to the relation with Hecate which was fully recognized in the fifth century, though religious influence may be detected at various other points. In all Greek literature, and at many centres of worship, Artemis was the daughter of Leto and the sister of Apollo. In consequence of this relation Leto received the attribution of motherhood which might properly have gone to Artemis, protector of mothers; Artemis became the ideal of young womanhood, as Apollo was the ideal of young manhood; the orgiastic dances of the goddess of fertility were in some places transformed to beautiful dances of chaste nymphs led by a goddess of music; the goddess of moisture and springs was recognized as the goddess of healing at springs (for example, Artemis Thermaia); it was easier to associate Artemis with the moon inasmuch as Apollo was associated with the sun; Artemis gained a place in such centres of Apollo worship as Delphi and received various epithets which belonged first to Apollo.[1] One might almost say that Artemis received the lyre from Apollo, and Apollo the bow from Artemis. The origin of this connection with Apollo is involved in obscurity. It is more than probable, as Farnell points out,[2] that "the place where the deities were first closely associated, and whence the belief in their twinship spread, was . . . Delos" and the neighboring Rheneia. The important fact remains that the Artemis of worship, like the Artemis of myth, was profoundly modified by this relation with Apollo.

The connection with Hecate is even more intimate, though not effective at so many points. The name *Hecate* seems to mean "Far-worker," a conception which appears also in the name Hekaerge at Delos and in poetic epithets of Apollo and Artemis:

[1] See Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopaedie*, 2. 1361.
[2] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, 2. 465.

the connection of this conception with the Hecate of myth and of worship is not to be discovered. We learn of Hecate as goddess of the night and of weird and uncanny rites connected with darkness; she is the goddess of entrances and of divided roads where a new road is entered; she is goddess of the moon and the special protector of women; dogs are her favorite animal. Farnell argues with force[1] that this is a Thracian-Phrygian earth goddess who found her way into Greece, where she came into connection with the Greek goddess of fertility and of hunting. We may point out, however, that the early Artemis (the goddess of fertility and Queen of the Wild) was far more like Hecate than like Artemis the sister of Apollo. It is probable that the older conception of Artemis divided when the goddess was brought into relation with Apollo, that on the one hand the Olympian Artemis became the ideal of maidenhood in all its purity, that on the other hand weird and half magical rites gathered about an Artemis Hecate who came to be more and more a goddess of the night, of souls wandering at night, of all that was uncanny. Certainly Hecate stands in relation with the more primitive type of Artemis, and if she be a foreign goddess, her influence on Artemis was to preserve and develop this more primitive type.

Relations with other gods, Aphrodite, Demeter, Dionysus, Hermes, etc., played their part in the history of Artemis, but no such important part as the relations with Apollo and Hecate. Moreover, the general influence of the Olympian worship (v. *supra*, p. 227) must have affected profoundly the peculiar rites in honor of a goddess of fertility, though in many places they persisted all through the history of ancient Greece. Rhythmic dance and hymn, the stately procession, and the sacrificial meal come into the worship of Artemis largely through the influence of worship in other Olympian cults.

8. The third important line of influence in shaping the conception of Artemis is found in myth and literature and plastic art. In the myths of Artemis she acquires some real personality — a

[1] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, 2. 509.

person easily vexed by neglect in Calydon, by the presumption of Actaeon, by the unchastity of Callisto; a person delighting in the dance and in hunting. The myths of Apollo, making a place for her, help to develop this personality. Yet it remains for the epic to give individual character to Artemis as to the other gods by making them real persons and actors in its drama. The personality of the goddess as developed in myth and poetry could but exercise a constant shaping influence on the belief of the worshipper. The poet's work was supplemented by that of the painter and the sculptor. Early vases depict the Queen of the Wild;[1] later she is pictured as sister of Apollo, or in some scene from an Artemis myth. On the frieze of Apollo's temple at Phigaleia she is seen riding with her brother in a chariot drawn by stags. The great temple statues, however, statues like the Dionysus of Alcamenes and the Brauronian Artemis of Praxiteles, were the means by which art profoundly modified religion. If it was the work of poetry to make the gods real persons, with a character that was individual yet not devoid of universal meaning, it was the work of plastic art so to represent these divine persons as to interpret to men their own religious experience.

9. To resume: The history of Artemis was written in two chapters, Artemis before the epic and Artemis from the rise of the epic on. After the rise of the epic the influences of creative imagination (which early had been active in myth) gave life to the personality of the goddess; they even deepened the religious meaning of the goddess for her worshipper. Before the rise of the epic, and in a measure later, religious influences were profoundly modifying the conception of Artemis and the forms of her worship. But in the earlier chapter of her history the influences which really shaped the conception of the goddess were the same forces which were at work in all phases of social development. Starting with this assumption, we find it to be the only reasonable hypothesis that the later complex Artemis was the result of a partial fusion of simpler and more vague nature-goddesses similar in

[1] Cp. Ἐφ. Ἀρχ. (1892), 219 f. and pl. 10.

type, which were worshipped more or less widely by the early small communities of Greece. While the possibility remains that the unifying power that made one Artemis was due to some foreign impulse, Cretan or Asiatic or Celtic, it would require strong evidence to prove that the goddess was not essentially Greek in origin and in development.

# APPENDIX II

## TABLE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AT ATHENS

| Month | Day | Name of Festival | God or Gods Honored |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hekatombaion | 12 | Kronia | Cronus and Rhea |
| | 16 | Synoikia | Athena (?); Eirene |
| | 27–28 | Panathenaia | Athena |
| Metageitnion | | Herakleia | Heracles |
| | | Eleutheria | Zeus |
| Boedromion | 5 | Genesia (Nemesia, Nekysia) | Gaia |
| | 6 | (Marathon celebration) | Artemis |
| | 7 (?) | Boedromia | Apollo |
| | 12 | Charisteria | Athena (?) |
| | 16–25 | Eleusinia | Demeter and Persephone |
| | 18 | Asklepieia | Asclepius |
| Pyanopsion | 7 | Pyanopsia | Apollo |
| | | Oschophoria | Apollo |
| | 8 | Theseia | |
| | 10–14(?) | Thesmophoria | Demeter and Persephone |
| | | Apatouria | Zeus Phratrios; Athena |
| | 30 | Chalkeia | Athena; Hephaestus |
| Poseideon | | Country Dionysia | Dionysus |
| | | Haloia | |

**TABLE OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS — (*Continued*)**

| Month | Day | Name of Festival | God or Gods Honored |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gamelion | 12 (?) | Epilenaia | Dionysus |
| | | Theogamia | (Zeus and Hera) |
| Anthesterion | 11–13 | Anthesteria | Dionysus |
| | | Lesser Mysteries | Demeter, Persephone, Dionysus |
| | 23 | Diasia | Zeus Meilichios |
| Elaphebolion | 9–13 | City Dionysia | Dionysus |
| | 14 | Pandia | Zeus |
| Mounichion | 6 (?) | Delphinia | Apollo |
| | 16 | Mounichia | Artemis |
| | 19 | Olympieia | Zeus |
| Thargelion | 6–7 | Thargelia | Apollo |
| | 19–20 | Bendideia | Artemis Bendis |
| | 20 | Kallynteria | Athena |
| | 25 (?) | Plynteria | Athena |
| Skirophorion | 12 | Skira, Skirophoria | Athena |
| | 14 | Dipolia ; Disoteria | Zeus Polieus |

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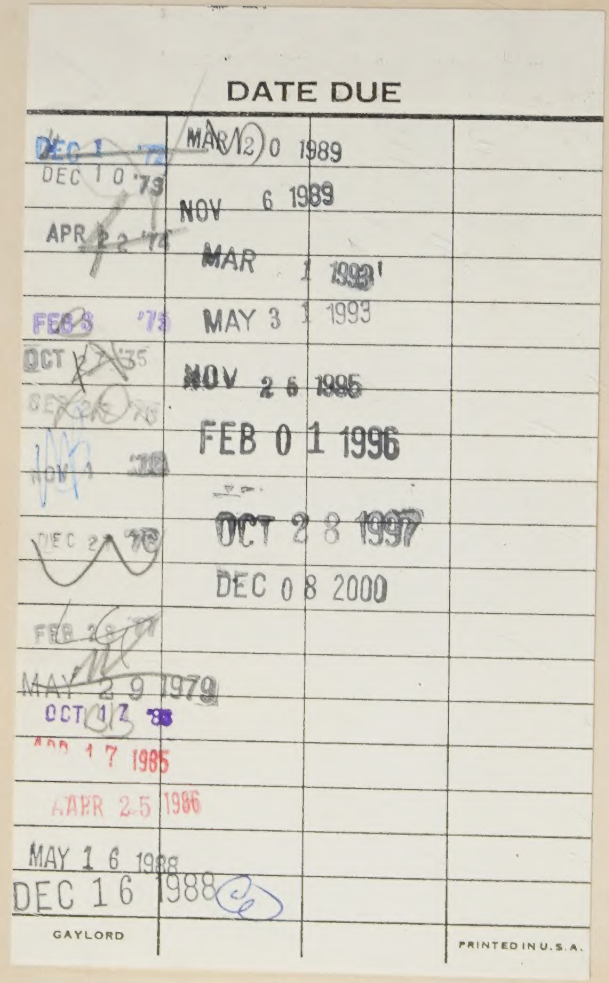
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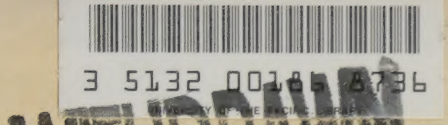
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